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THE INVITED LEVIATHAN IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN: STRONG-MEN, THE AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE, AND THE SONS OF IRAQ

by

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Despite robust scholarship on the general themes of state-building, little scholarship exists on the strategies of exogenous powers on the construction of developing states. Further complicating these strategies is the influence of strong men, local elites who seek to mitigate the influence of both the developing state and the exogenous state on local modes of power and influence—often through the development of armed militias. Appropriating the construct of Barnett and Zurcher's "peacebuilder's construct" and utilizing the Sons of Iraq and the Afghan Local Police as case-studies, this thesis seeks to explore the current relationship between local strong men, developing state governments, and the exogenous state (or the "invited leviathan") in two states where U.S. policy has dictated the deployment of hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops. Powerful arguments can be made regarding U.S. policy in support of, and against, these militias. This thesis will show that U.S. empowerment of these militias can not only improve local security conditions, but it can empower disenfranchised groups at the state level. Understanding the dynamics at play in these circumstances can help inform the nature of future interaction with strong men, militias, and developing governments.

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THE AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE, AND THE SONS OF IRAQ**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABP	Afghan Border Police
ALP	Afghan Local Police
AMF	Afghan Military Force
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANAP	Afghan National Auxiliary Police
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AP3	Afghan Public Protection Program
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
ASG	Afghan Security Guards
CLC	Concerned Local Citizens
CDF	Community Defense Forces
CFSOCC	Coalition Forces Special Operations Combatant Command
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HIG	Hizb-e-Islami
IA	Iraqi Army
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IP	Iraqi Police
ISAF	Internal Security Assistance Forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
JAI	Jaysh Al-Islami
JAM	Jaysh Al-Mahdi
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps-Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Forces-Iraq
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NATO	North American Treaty Organization
NDS	National Directorate of Security

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

PRT   Provincial Reconstruction Team

SIGAR   Special Inspector General for Iraqi Construction

SOF   Special Operations Forces

SOI   Sons of Iraq

TAA   Thawar Al-Anbar

VSO   Village Stability Operations

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The Sons of Iraq (SOI) and the Afghan Local Police (ALP) have been viewed as successful initiatives that provide local security for the state by extending the reach of the central government. State-building[1] and development scholarship, however, suggests these militias[2] sacrifice long-term state development for short-term security gains. This chapter will explore the literature as it relates to state-building and war, strong-men in the development of the state, the phenomenon of the "invited leviathan"—a model developed by academics Michael Barnett and Cristhoph Zurcher called the "peace-maker's contract"—which is useful for describing the factors at work between actors during state-building and, finally, the case for the local militias and the case against them.

The establishment of reasonable levels of security is necessary before a central government can effectively consolidate social power and enact economic reforms. In the case of the SOI movement, security gains enabled the government in Baghdad significant room to maneuver when it came to reconstruction, development, and governance reform. Furthermore, at a basic level, the empowerment of disenfranchised segments of the population (post-regime Sunnis in the case of Iraq) forced the central government to reach an accommodation with this population. The emergence of the SOI, supported by an external state (the United States), empowered the Sunni minority in such a way that the central government in Baghdad was forced to open a dialogue and concede some powers to them, thus integrating Sunni powerbrokers into the government and ostensibly making the government more representative of its populace—or at least of a group representing part of that populace.

There are some indications the ALP could serve in a similar capacity to the SOI, by integrating disenfranchised Pashtuns from violent territory into the central authority

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[1] "State-building" is identified, at its simplest, as "the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones." See Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), ix.

[2] "Militias" are identified as a primarily political institution (rather than primarily military institution) which is part of a strategy of local rule and state-building. The goal of a militia is population control. They are sometimes called paramilitaries, death-squads, or home, civil, or village guards. See Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107.

apparatus in Afghanistan. This seems unlikely for a variety of reasons (generally related to questions of legitimacy and the inability of the weak central government to reach isolated Pashtun regions with any regular effect), but at the very least, the United States and Afghan governments continue to hold the ALP as an effective local security apparatus. It is still too early to tell what influence the Afghan Local Police will truly exert on the security environment and to see if they will affect the neopatrimonial Karzai government, but possibilities can be illustrated via on-going operations and historical study.

A.   MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Security from violence is one of the most important pre-conditions that must be established before executing the myriad operations associated with institution-building.[3] Counterinsurgent practitioners have long praised the positive effects local armed groups can have in terms in providing security, developing intelligence, providing secure bases for sustainment, and communicating the goals of the government to the local population.[4] It is therefore not a surprise that when local elites from the Afghan and Iraqi populations emerged who seemed able to exert local influence and provide security, U.S. leaders seized upon the opportunities these individuals presented. U.S. interaction and sustainment for these movements, as well as the U.S. role in facilitating host-nation support for these movements, was undertaken in an environment of immense political pressure, strategic shifts, and the natural frictions of developing states, which in many cases means that policy was disjointed, largely driven by personal relationships between

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[3] Robert Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3, states no political needs are as important as "human security." Army FM 3–24 *Counterinsurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 43, seconds this, stating, "Without a secure environment, no permanent reforms can be implemented and disorder spreads."

[4] In 1940, the U.S. Marine Corps dedicated an entire chapter in their *Small Wars Manual* to the "establishment of an efficient and well-trained armed native force" (p12–2) including detailed sections on the creation of police, army, constabulary, and auxiliary forces; U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii, 2005). In 1964 Roger Trinquier, advocated "strategic hamlets" as well as local armed forces which provide security for their own villages; Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 62–3. In the same year, David Galula indicated local armed forces may be useful but he saw them as occurring very late in a somewhat linear process after the defeat of an insurgency and during the process of re-establishing order; Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 91.

U.S. personnel and local leaders, and executed with an aim of improving local security conditions in conjunction with a broader attempt to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.

When it came to the level of control the Iraqi state wielded on developing a democratic state, the effect of these militias likely was considered by U.S. forces, but such considerations were deemed less important than bringing a reduction in violence, and eventually, re-deployment of U.S. troops. Nor were such militias authorized by the Iraqi state until relatively late in the process.[5] This was generally expected considering the fact that tactical and operational innovation in Army and Marine battalions and brigades was largely responsible for the growth of the most dynamic COIN policies in Iraq, including partnership with local militias.[6] While it seems possible that more analysis has been applied recently to this phenomenon of state-interaction with local strong-men and militias in Afghanistan (for example, through the doctrine of Village Stability Operations), establishment of dominant local security has been generally the overriding concern when organizing these militias, while the long-term effect of militias on the state has been rarely discussed.

Using the SOI and the ALP as case-studies, this thesis will examine the issue of local militias and their ability to impart or degrade state capacity. Can local militias improve the ability of the state to govern? If so, how? What can the United States do to maximize the state-bolstering capacity of such organizations in the future?

B.   IMPORTANCE

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has embarked on some form or another of nation-building every 18 months.[7] Therefore, lessons learned regarding the emergence of local militias and their ability to leverage support from local populations, as

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[5] Tom Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 164–5, 202–204.

[6] James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005–2007* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 194.

[7] Robert C. Orr, "Introduction," in *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Resolution,* ed. Robert C. Orr (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2004), x.

well as from central governments, are instructive to dealing with the challenges in developing states world-wide. This is especially pertinent when one considers that when outsiders impose settlements on post-conflict violence, more than half the time a return to large-scale violence is likely.[8]

Corresponding analysis of this phenomenon can inform both academic and policy perspectives. This analysis is critical for understanding the current state of U.S. foreign policy regarding state-building, as well as toward the Middle East region in general. Such analysis may also inform regional U.S. military strategy.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

1.   STATE-BUILDING AND WAR

According to Charles Tilly, states (and their bureaucracies) emerged in Europe because of the need to extract resources from populations in order to finance the wars of kings and, as a result, the means of coercion, capital, and bureaucracy maximized at a centralized level.[9]   Although this is a useful way to view state development in the Western world, the effects that war and conflict have had on the development of the state in the rest of the world are disconcerting.

Jeffrey Herbst notes that, in Africa, states have generally failed to conduct significant interstate war because of prohibitive demographic, political, and geographic factors. Lacking natural ethnic or linguistic unity, and furthermore being unable to use the mobilizing effects of war, these weak states cannot effectively establish institutions or economic mobilization because their populations lack the incentive to identify with each other or the state.[10]   In his analysis of South American state development, Miguel Centeno argues that states with limited resources (and/or limited extractive capacity, two deficiencies which are inextricably linked) are simply incapable of conducting large-scale

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[8] Scott Feil, "Laying the Foundation: Enhancing Security Capabilities," in Robert C. Orr, ed, *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 41.

[9] Charles Tilly, "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169–171.

[10] Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa," *International Security* 14:4 (Spring 1990), 117–139.

war-making. Therefore, conflicts between such states are smaller—and, as a result, South American states struggle to mobilize the economy or reduce social fragmentation.[11] Theirry Gongora suggests that since the developed states already monopolize production of weapon systems, as well as now-international bureaucratic systems, states in the Middle East are typically economically crippled by conventional warfare, since such warfare in the region has proven to be reliant on external resources and rarely involves mobilization of anything inside the state other than young men toward military service.[12] Tilly's analysis appears incomplete when one attempts to use it to address developing states, however. As Michael Mann points out, most states have not possessed a monopoly on force and many have not even desired it.[13] Therefore, in reality, monopoly over force is empirically ranked according to degrees rather than ontologically specified.[14]

Diane Davis, in her discussion of urban violence in Central and South America, posits that Tilly's central argument is true but it must also be understood that numerous groups use violence to establish their goals, and that members of society make decisions about which group to support based on a complex web of intersecting values, motivations, and expectations that very often have little or nothing to do with national-level concerns.[15] Anna Leander argues that in developing states, the ideas of capital creation and consolidation, extensive bureaucratic infrastructure, and extensive military power consolidated at the national level are not necessary and, as a means for organizing national strategies, are even counterproductive. In a globalized environment, external states and institutions like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have the effect of reducing state influence and increasing the distance between the people and the state.

[11] Miguel Angel Centeno, "Limited War and Limited States," in Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Periera, ed., *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 82–95.

[12] Theirry Gongora, "War-Making and State Power in the Contemporary Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29:3 (August 1997), 323–240.

[13] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11.

[14] J.P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," in Wolfram F. Hanreider, ed., *Comparative Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971), 51–89.

[15] Diane E. Davis, "Irregular Armed Forces, Shifting Patterns of Commitment, and Fragmented Sovereignty in the Developing World," *Theory and Society* 39:3–4 (May 2010).

Because the state cannot reach the population, pre-existent local elites are often empowered to engage the population on behalf of the state—including in terms of providing security and enforcing order. The power these elites exert degrades the capacity of the state's military and police forces (if they even sufficiently exist) to provide security because the elites have assumed a competitor status with the state. If the state cannot offer functional security, the population lacks further incentives for viewing the state as anything other than an artificiality which provides no significant improvement to their lives.[16]

Why do developing states struggle to implement coherent strategies that result in effective development? Joel Migdal notes that states must have the abilities to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and wield resources in appropriate ways.[17] If states cannot penetrate society, due to the influence of actors with pre-existing influence, the state cannot implement its strategies.

2.   STRONG MEN AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

As Leander and Davis argue, the success of state strategies often relies on the exertion of social control at a local level. Because society is a "mélange of social organizations"[18] with competing interests, disciplines, and myths entwined throughout intersected networks of parties and personalities, social control is difficult to exert. "Strong men" [19]—traditional leaders and interlocutors, whether tribal leaders, religious functionaries, warlords, or wise-men who have gained power through the maturation of their own survival strategies—exist within this social mélange.[20] These individuals are extremely difficult to uproot from the social system, and strategies for establishing social

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[16] Leander, Anna Leander, "Wars and the Un-Making of States: Taking Tilly Seriously in the Modern World," in Stefano Guzzini and Dietrich Jung, ed., *Copenhagen Peace Research: Conceptual Innovations and Contemporary Security Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 69–80.

[17] Joel Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States: *State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4.

[18] Ibid., 28.

[19] I will borrow Joel Migdal's term for this class of individuals as they relate to state-building and attempt to use it as universally as possible throughout this thesis. There are also many other terms for these individuals, including "local powerbrokers," "subnational elites," and "armed non-state actors" (ANSA).

[20] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 105.

control by eliminating or co-opting the influence of strong-men are among the most critical strategies a state takes.[21] Migdal states, "[T]he failure of states to have people in even the most remote villages behave as state leaders want ultimately affects the very coherence and character of the states themselves."[22]

Strong men are a naturally occurring phenomenon and may play positive roles across society and states. They are often needed to implement the strategies of the state. Whether it is because of a traditional reliance on kinship structures related to the clan or tribe, a distinct lack of developed human capital that can function as "implementers,"[23] or any variety of other issues existing in an individual state, the capabilities strong-men possess may be exactly what the state needs. Further, whether the state needs them or not, the state may lack enough power to dislodge them. This is especially the case in neopatrimonial absolutist states (defined by Atul Kohli as states with "weakly centralized and barely legitimate authority structures, personalistic leaders unconstrained by norms or institutions, and bureaucracies of poor quality)"[24] like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, where anti-government insurgencies arrayed against weak central governments threaten the existence of the state itself, these strong-men are extraordinarily influential. They often control access to the "second state," or local, traditional networks, which possess both efficiency and legitimacy among local populations.[25] They can side with the state or an insurgency, or their own side (whether via tribe, religious network, criminal syndicate, or other variation), and exert enormous influence in such a fractured and unpredictable environment.

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[21] Ibid., 22.

[22] Ibid., 5.

[23] Migdal argues the relationship between state leaders, implementers, and strongmen, articulated through his "triangle of accommodation," captures the dilemmas all sides face while cooperating or sidestepping each other in order to implement successful strategies. See Migdal, Chapter 7, in *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 239–258.

[24] Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

[25] Eric Scheye, "Redeeming Statebuilding's Misconceptions: Power, Politics, and Social Efficacy and Capital in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 14 (2010), 248–275.

In Afghanistan, U.S. personnel have worked with strong-men and warlords since 2001 as a matter of strategy in order to defeat the Taliban and foreign extremists, therefore undermining the legitimacy of the central government.[26] Over the subsequent years strategy has evolved, as have the actors on each side of the strategy. Despite the disruption brought to local patronage and client networks by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) activity, strong-men, tribal networks, and provincial warlords continue to exert influence on the population—although Noor Ullah and Antonio Guistozzi argue that the legitimization of the state is increasingly tied to resources being funneled into the state from sources outside of the state, which has changed the nature of Afghanistan's most influential strong-men.[27] In Iraq, U.S. alliances with tribal leaders in Anbar province in 2006 improved local security but strengthened the grip local actors exerted on sources of power and influence.[28] Strong-men have been empowered in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

3.   THE INVITED LEVIATHAN AND LOCAL MILITIAS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Complicating the matter of strong-men even further is the phenomenon of Jan Angstrom's "invited Leviathan." Externally-supported state-building (state-building resourced, planned, and executed by the "invited leviathan") often creates a friction with practitioners attempting to execute policy in challenging conditions in local environments.[29] The "invited Leviathan" further exerts enormous influences over the strategies of the developing state (the "home-grown Leviathan"). The danger, however, is that "the invited Leviathan may inadvertently weaken the legitimacy of the home-grown Leviathan, as the population may be more willing to consent to the rule of international

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[26] Astri Suhrke, "The Dangers of a Tight Embrace: Externally Assisted Statebuilding in Afghanistan," in Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, ed., *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 230.

[27] Antonio Giustozzi and Noor Ullah, "The Inverted Cycle: Kabul and the Strongmen's Competition for Control over Kandahar, 2001–2006," *Central Asian Survey* 26:2 (June 2007), 167–184.

[28] Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival* 50:2 (2008), 85–88.

[29] Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, "Introduction: Understanding the Contradictions of Postwar Statebuilding," in Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, ed, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3.

forces. In this way, external military forces may undermine the state."[30] This is currently the case in Afghanistan (though the situation remains fluid), and in Iraq from 2003–2011; U.S. influence over nearly all Iraqi and Afghan policies is enormous.

The problem of the "invited Leviathan" is illustrated through the rubric of the SOI. The SOI emerged in al Anbar province in 2006 and, by 2008, and grew to become a national movement encompassing around 100,000 Iraqis working as members of local militias providing security in their communities (they were mostly Sunni, and initially aligned with, trained by, and paid by U.S. forces). The predominantly Shia government resisted this arrangement, especially when U.S. leadership pressed Baghdad to take over not just responsibility for their organization and payment, but also integration into the broader Iraqi security apparatus. The government was disposed to see the SOI as a problematic armed group composed of the most militant of the former ruling elite. Conversely, U.S. senior military leaders viewed the SOI as important to the larger U.S. strategy in Iraq, because they were vital to the security of local communities and one pillar of the strategies, which apparently caused the largely successful reduction in violence across the nation which occurred by 2009. [31]

The United States has pursued similar strategies in Afghanistan. The quality and quantity of Afghan security forces have been a source of enormous tension between NATO forces and the Afghan government since 2002, especially when contrasted with the growing vitality of the Taliban since approximately 2006. A series of militia programs has been implemented since 2001, none of which has been particularly successful, and some of which have been notable for their public failures.[32] The ALP, started in 2010, is only the latest incarnation of these programs. Though the Afghan

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[30] Jan Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan: External Forces, War, and State-Building in Afghanistan," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19:3 (2008), 374–396.

[31] General David Petraeus, "Gen. Petraeus's Opening Remarks on Iraq," *Washington Post*, April 8, 2008.

[32] Rachel Reid and Sahr Muhammedally highlight the successes and failures of the Afghan Military Force (AMF), Afghan Security Guards (ASG), Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), Community Defense Forces (CDF), and the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3), as well as other precursors, in detail in their 2011 document. See Reid and Muhammedally*, Just Don't Call It a Militia: Impunity, Militias, and the Afghan Local Police* (New York: Human Rights Watch: 2011), 15–49. See also Chapter 3 of this thesis.

government has generally sided with the United States when it comes to the creation of these militias (some militias have been initiated by U.S. forces and some by the Afghan government), some members of the Afghan legislature and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and many locals, have viewed these militias, especially considering the decades-long history of warlordism in Afghanistan, with distrust and frustration.[33] This extends to the ALP.

4.   THE PEACEBUILDER'S CONTRACT: A MODEL OF STATE-BUILDING OPERATIONS

Michael Barnett and Christoph Zurcher propose a theoretical model of understanding post-conflict state-building, or what they call "peace-building." Their model is consistent with the ideas expressed in Joel Migdal's "triangle of accommodation" but fleshes out the characteristics of this phenomenon more clearly. Peace-building is defined as an "effort to eliminate the root causes of conflict, to promote the security of the individual, societal groups, and the state, and to nurture features that create the conditions for stable peace." [34] They argue it is not the same as state-building, because of the dilemmas that developing states always face—legitimacy and security. These are generally not pronounced problems in most other states where, Barnett and Zurcher postulate, actual "state-building" takes place. Peace-building, therefore, is further designated as a system of strategies by which outside states (or the peace-builders) pursue the improvement or outright construction of institutions within a state. The state is deemed effective if it can provide basic services and deliver public goods; it is also generally designed to be a liberal-democracy with inclusive institutions, rule of law, and market-driven development.[35] This seems overly ambitious, but when one analyzes the examples of peace-building throughout the globe (Barnett and Zurcher specifically

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[33] Mathieu Lefevre, Local Defence in *Afghanistan: A Review of Government-Backed Initiatives, (Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 2012); Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia.*

[34] Michael Barnett and Christoph Zurcher, "The Peacebuilder's Contract: How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood," in Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, edit, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 26.

[35] Ibid., 28.

address Tajikistan and Afghanistan), many peace-builders[36] seem to pursue these ambitious designs and construct strategies which, in retrospect, seemed destined to fail. Why is this?

This is because peace-builders are not pursuing peace-building strategies in a vacuum. They must address their strategies in an environment populated by state elites and subnational elites. State elites, however, will pursue their own interests, which may or may not coincide with the interests of peace-builders. The fundamental interests of the state elites, however, coincide around maintaining their own power, gaining access to the resources of the peace-builders, and earning recognition from both their population and the international community that they are effective leaders. Barnett and Zurcher posit four different outcomes to their model: cooperative peace-building, captured peace-building, compromised peace-building, and confrontational peace-building (Figure 1).

Outcome	Description
Cooperative Peace-building	**Unimpeded delivery of services and assistance leading to the creation of new institutions that distribute political and economic power to new actors**
Captured Peace-building	**Local elites are able to shift peace-building programs and resources so that they are consistent with their interests**
Compromised Peace-building	**Local elites and peace-builders jointly determine assistance activities**
Confrontational Peace-building	**Peace-builders and local elites develop antagonistic and conflictive relations, leading to the suspension of assistance by peace-builders and active resistance by local elites**

Figure 1.   Kinds of peace-building.**37**

Compromised peace-building is the most likely outcome to the game, when the outcome is decided between the peace-builder and the state elite. Partially because neither party is likely to defect unless the only outcome is confrontational peacebuilding,

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36 By "peace-builders," Barnett and Zurcher mean external states, agencies, institutions, or alliances which seek to establish "stability and liberalization." See Barnett and Zurcher, "The Peacebuilder's Contract," 24. This is consistent with the conceptual terminology of "invited leviathan" or external state-builders.

37 Ibid., 33.

each side is likely to settle on compromised peacebuilding as an acceptable outcome. This is because the peace-builder tends to view the deliverance of assistance as the most important of its responsibilities in the state, and other considerations, like holding complete autonomy over assistance, are secondary (in many real-world cases, in fact, the involvement of state elites in aid activities is desired). The state elite wishes to have both external aid as well as to exert as much control over the aid process as possible—since the prestige of the state elite is at least partially tied to the influence the state elite wields not just at the state-level but also internationally. Preferences are assumed as follows (Figure 2).

Value	Peace-builders	State Elites	Subnational Elites
4	Cooperative	Captured	Captured
3	Compromised	Compromised	Compromised
2	Confrontational	Confrontational	Confrontational
1	Captured	Cooperative	Cooperative

Figure 2.   Rank order of preferences of different actors for different outcomes[38]

Compromised peace-building often results in the peace-builder's contract. An agreement springs into place whereby the peace-builder provides resources and legitimacy in order for the state elites to provide stability and implementation of reforms. "Consequently, this contract enforces the status quo even as it leaves open some possibility for reform. In other words, the reforms that do take place will unfold in a way that protects the interests of [state] elites," Barnett and Zurcher state.[39]

Subnational elites,[40] however, further complicate the relationship between state elites and peace-builders. In obvious divergence to the interests of state elites, the driving

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[38] Ibid., 34.

[39] Ibid., 35.

[40] "Subnational elites" in this context are consistent with Migdal's "strong men."

interest of subnational elites is to uphold autonomy from the central government and sustain local power, which is in further contrast to what peace-builders want, which is to liberalize—with the pluralization of representation and centralization of power at the state level. Especially in collapsed or developing states, subnational elites often exert more leverage than either peace-builders or state elites, and they therefore might be able to deal directly with peace-builders in order to implement captured peace-building. What is more likely is that subnational elites will ally with state elites, or peace-builders, in order to coopt the process to better advance their interests.[41] Ultimately, Barnett and Zurcher hold that liberal peace-building, because it is either compromised or captured, is more likely to "reproduce rather than transform existing state-society relations and patrimonial politics."[42]

D.   THE ARGUMENT

1.   THE CASE FOR LOCAL MILITIAS

As already mentioned, historical COIN theory has maintained a long recognition of the positive effects that armed groups can have on the local security environment. U.S. formal COIN doctrine is confused on this point, warning that militias "constitute a long-term threat to law and order" while touting the establishment of home-guard units later in the same COIN manual.[43] Nonetheless, the United States's grand strategies in both Iraq and Afghanistan were dependent on the development of host-nation security forces in order to hasten U.S. reductions in force as rapidly as possible.[44] In Iraq, this was generally perceived to mean formal security forces, in the sense of police and military forces, but as time progressed, the development of security forces (especially manning)

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[41] Ibid., 34–36.

[42] Ibid., 36.

[43] Pages 112–113 discuss militias as a dangerous outcome of weak governments which must be tracked like the enemy, while page 212 addresses home-guard units in a largely positive manner. See FM 3–24, *The U.S. Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 110–113, 212.

[44] National Security Council, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, November 2005, 18–22; National Security Advisor (Gen [ret] James L. Jones), "President Obama's Final Orders for Afghanistan Pakistan Strategy," November 29, 2009, in Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2010), 386–7.

remained uneven, and as political friction developed in the United States, it became imperative to seize the initiative whenever and wherever possible.[45] Many U.S. officers perceived the militias that emerged as capable and effective at reducing violence, and one called them a "water-shed."[46] There is no doubt that the emergence of these groups on a wide scale, circa 2007 and 2008, coincided with a large drop in violence nation-wide.[47] It has been asserted that, at least in Iraq, these militias have increased democracy by enabling local populations to engage in non-violent, political dialogue with their local government, and to carry that dialogue from the local government to the central government.[48] It further appears that in some circumstances, such armed groups may evolve into legitimate tools of the state, as long as they are perceived as professional, impartial, and adherers to the law.[49]

As far as U.S. strategy in Iraq was concerned, these militias were useful because they helped establish local security. It is unsurprising that some have attempted to transfer similar success to Afghanistan. In fact, the Obama administration has recently announced that increasing financial and materiel resources are being dedicated to the ALP.[50] Some scholars have long argued that the policies undertaken in support of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan have mistakenly sought to increase the power of the central government instead of empowering existing local governmental structures to provide de-

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[45] General David Petraeus, for instance, in early 2007 directed the battalion executive officer of a unit responsible for the neighborhoods of Ameriyah, a haven for Sunni extremists in western Baghdad, to support a local militia organized against Al Qaeda, and to "not let up," even in the face of bureaucratic and organization resistance from U.S. military leadership or the Iraqi government. See Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 238–9.

[46] "Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable with Colonel Martin N. Stanton, Chief of Reconciliation and Engagement, Multinational Corps-Iraq via Teleconference from Iraq Time: 12:00 Noon EDT Date Friday, November 2, 2007." Washington, DC: Federal News Service, 2007.

[47] Greg Bruno estimated that violence dropped up to 90 percent in some districts. See Bruno, "The Role of the 'Sons of Iraq' in Improving Security," *Washington Post*, April 28, 2008.

[48] Anthony E. Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," *Military Review* (Jan-Feb 2010), 90.

[49] Susan Rose-Ackerman, "Establishing the Rule of Law," in Robert Rotberg, edit, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 187.

[50] David S. Cloud, "U.S. Plans to Beef Up Rural Police Forces in Afghanistan," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 2012.

centralized reach-back to the government.[51]   Furthermore, the fact that in some circumstances these armed groups appear superficially consistent with traditional modes of law and order in the region is often touted as a reason to empower the groups.[52]   The ALP has been argued to be an organization that can contribute to "grass-roots" local development, thus strengthening the links from local to central governance.[53]   One can argue, however, that the policies undertaken by both U.S. forces and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) have diluted the strengths of these ideas and changed the ALP into something else.

2.   THE CASE AGAINST LOCAL MILITIAS

Strong men, whether warlords, insurgent leaders, businessmen, religious figures, or tribal leaders, often find themselves controlling armed groups in fractured states. Once empowered, whether they seized power themselves or were enabled by outside powers, these groups become a political economy all their own, where they exert the influence (often through coercion and violence) to provide services and security to the population.[54]   The state is then subjected to recurrent spasms of violence as armed groups compete with each other and with the government, hastening state failure.[55]   Larry Goodson notes that since their goals are generally antithetical to the state, those working with warlords must plan how to dislodge them eventually.[56]

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[51] Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "All Counterinsurgency is Local," *The Atlantic*, October 20, 2008, 16–17.

[52] Nazih Ayubi, for example, discusses tribal networks and the empowerment of chieftains to provide for local security as well as soldiery for the Ottoman empire; see Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (New York: I.B. Touris, 2006), 70. The arbakai, traditional Pashtun police serving the local tribe, are often cited as a historical precedent for the Afghan Local Police; see Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan* (Crisis Occasional Papers, 2008).

[53] Seth G. Jones, *The Strategic Logic of Militia*, Rand National Defense Research Institute, January 2012, 29–31; Joseph A. L'Etoile, "Transforming the Conflict in Afghanistan," *Prism* 2: 4 (September 2011).

[54] William Reno, "The Politics of Violent Opposition in Collapsing States," *Government and Opposition* 40:2 (Spring 2005), 128.

[55] Michael T. Klare, "The Deadly Connection: Paramilitary Bands, Small Arms Diffusion, and State Failure," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 116.

[56] Larry P. Goodson, "Lessons of Nation-Building in Afghanistan," in Francis Fukuyama, ed., *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2006), 153.

In discussing Iraq in 2011, Myriam Benraad argues that armed, trained, and empowered militias under the control of tribal actors pose danger to the central government that outweighs the benefits of such groups. She argues that tribal actors and other local strong men used the SOI movement to advance their economic, political, and provincial interests in the face of government attempts at central consolidation.[57] Afghanistan, a failed state that emblemizes the problems that arise from armed groups, has struggled with similar issues since 2001 (at least). Kimberly Marten, after analyzing the history of warlords in China and medieval Europe, contends that U.S. support for warlords and armed groups is mistaken because these groups maintain their influence only by impeding the very emergence of a functional state.[58]

E.   CASE SELECTION

State development—the process of establishing social control, a functional economy, and effective institutions at the state level—is a laborious process. It is made more difficult with the presence of sectarian conflict, anti-government insurgency, degraded infrastructure, a lack of experience within the governmental sector, and the extensive presence of foreign military forces which lack intimate familiarity with the local language, culture, and political systems at hand. Even international peace-building efforts may complicate state-building efforts.[59]   Strong-men are another complicating factor. Scholarship suggests that strong-men impede the successful development of the state. Strategies taken by the state toward accommodation with or elimination of these strong-men has enormous effects not only on the exertion of social control (including the elusive "social contract") but also, potentially, in the development of institutions and the economy.

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[57] Myriam Benraad, "Iraq's Tribal 'Sahwa': Its Rise and Fall," *Middle East Policy* 18:1 (Spring 2011), 121–131.

[58] Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security* 31:3 (Winter 2006/7), 41.

[59] Barnett Rubin, "Peace Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?" *Third World Quarterly* 27:1, From Nation-Building to State-Building (2006).

1. SONS OF IRAQ (SOI)

The SOI[60] program emerged in 2006 in al Anbar province as an armed militia largely organized around tribal leadership. As the financial and security-related rewards of the program became obvious to the local population, similar movements and programs spread throughout the entire country. These militias were composed of and eventually led by traditional leaders in tribal networks, as well as ex-Ba'ath officials and Saddam-era Army officers, local businessmen, ex-insurgents, and criminals—in short, by local strongmen who found themselves in a position to, with U.S. assistance, establish conditions of local security outside the established structure of the Iraqi state. While the positive effects of the militias on the reduction of violence were undeniable, the long-term effects remain nebulous. Has the central government reached, in a legitimate, extractive, and reciprocal manner, the local populations in Iraq because of systems and policies built around the SOI? Is Iraqi tribal culture consistent with the usage of local tribally-aligned forces? What effect has the SOI movement had on the development of the Iraqi state so far? How are strong-men empowered through the movement? Using Barnett and Zercher's model of the "peace-builder's contract," are the SOI an example of cooperative peace-building, captured peace-building, compromised peace-building, or confrontational peace-building?

2. AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE (ALP)

The recent history of militias in Afghanistan is a violent and largely destabilized one. Since the 1980s, Afghans have formed and served inside armed groups for a variety of reasons associated with resistance to central authority and/or occupation, jihad, establishment of local stability, and sectarian concerns. Since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and the establishment of the Karzai regime, local militia have been

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[60] For the purposes of this thesis, the author will use "Sons of Iraq" as the broad term used when referring to Iraqi organizations who acted to provide local security for their communities from insurgent forces from the period of 2006–2011. These forces have been known by a variety of terms in a variety of locations, including Sahwa, Awakening in Anbar forces, Concerned Local Citizens (CLC), and "neighborhood watch" forces, as well localized terms consistent with provincial histories. The movement emerged locally due to a variety of different circumstances and terminology for identifying it, unsurprisingly, was very local as well. Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) used Concerned Local Citizens as the formal term in published documents in 2007–8; the author recalls U.S. senior leadership calling militia members "Sons of Iraq" during his 15-month deployment in Kirkuk (2007–8).

generated, many with the support of the Karzai government or U.S. forces, in order to better establish order according to local conditions. The latest incarnation of this is the ALP. According to Barnett and Zercher's model of the "peace-builder's contract," is the ALP an example of cooperative peace-building, captured peace-building, compromised peace-building, or confrontational peace-building? Has the central government reached, in a legitimate, extractive, and reciprocal manner, the local populations in Afghanistan because of systems and policies built up around the ALP? Is Pashtunwali[61] consistent with the local militias—and are the militias currently in existence consistent with cultural mores?   What effect has the ALP, and myriad other militia movements, had in Afghanistan?

F.   METHODOLOGY

This thesis will include analysis of the literature state-building as it pertains to developing states, reconstruction, democracy, and legitimacy, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bulk of the thesis will be written as a comparative study, using the SOI militias (circa 2006–2012) and the ALP militias (circa 2010–212) as in-depth "case studies" by which state-building literature and history in these examples will be compared. Data in these studies will be drawn from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including scholarly books and papers, articles and journals, published memoirs, biographies, testimony, and interviews, public polling/data surveys (if available), congressional and government reports, traditional media sources (newspapers, magazines, etc.), and commissioned policy and research documents (i.e., Rand). Conclusions will be drawn from the case-studies. These conclusions will be the basis for recommendations for policy or further research.

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[61] Pashtunwali, at its simplest explanation, is a "code of principles thoroughly rooted in the primacy of maintaining honor and reputation." It is by no means simple, however, and governs nearly all aspects of the daily life of most Pashtuns. While Pashtuns are perceived as the largest tribal group in the Afghanistan region, accounting for approximately 40 percent of the population of Afghanistan, not all Pashtuns abide by the code of Pashtunwali. The nuanced code of Pashtunwali is especially important to understanding the world-view not just of the Taliban but of the millions of Pashtuns who reside especially in the east and south of Afghanistan. See Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 3rd ed., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 59.

G.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis will trace state-building efforts through the phenomenon of the SOI and the ALP. This chapter has outlined the literature regarding state-building, strong-men, peace-building, the "invited leviathan," and the peace-builder's contract. It also addresses the pertinent arguments in favor of and contrary to the subject of local militias. The second chapter is a case-study of the SOI, including the history of Saddam's tribal engagement in the 1980s and 1990s, which helps explain the motivations of Anbari sheikhs when it came to interactions with U.S. forces, insurgent forces, and the Iraqi government from 2003–2012; this chapter concludes the SOI provide scholars with a clear example of compromised state-building. The third chapter is a case-study of the ALP, including a discussion of the traditional idea of arbakai as well as analysis of previous versions of local militias which have been used in Afghanistan since 2001, which concludes that the ALP have, in practice, provided scholars with another example of compromised state-building. The fourth chapter presents conclusions regarding U.S. state-building efforts vis-à-vis the ALP and SOI, lessons learned, and their applicability to future state-building efforts.

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II.   CASE STUDY: SONS OF IRAQ

A.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will address the tribal structure in Iraq, focusing as much as possible on the Sunni tribes, existing prior to the U.S. invasion in 2003. It will trace this structure to the Awakening movement (which began in 2006). This chapter will also address the relationship between U.S. forces, tribal strong-men in the Anbar region, and Iraqi leaders in Baghdad. This chapter concludes with the assertion that the SOI phenomenon comprises an excellent example of compromised peace-building.

Why did the SOI come into existence? More importantly, why did they succeed to such a large measure in 2006 and 2007? Accommodation with tribal sheiks was recommended as early as 2003 by some informed commentators.[62] Further, armed groups, drawn from the local population and which fought against the insurgency, came into existence in several locations earlier in the Iraq conflict but did not last long, let alone inspire a national movement.[63] By late 2006 in Anbar, and 2007 throughout the entire state, however, conditions were ripe for the emergence of a movement composed of Iraqis who desired a new political situation. The relationship between the Iraqi government, the U.S. government, and the SOI provides an example of compromised state-building, and is therefore a valuable example for analysis.

It must be clarified that the Awakening, and the armed groups that emerged from it, were a phenomenon linked to the specific political, tribal, and military situation in

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[62]Michael Eisenstadt, "Conclusion," in Michael Eisenstadt and Eric Mathewson, ed., *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003, 74.

[63] Examples of early armed groups include a militia raised by the Albu Nimr tribe in 2004, the "Hamza Brigade" in early 2005 (a combination of Albu Mahal and Albu Nimr tribesman), the "Desert Protectors" (largely composed of ex-Hamza members) in mid-2005, and the Anbar People's Council, largely composed of member of the Fahd tribe and linked to the 1920s Revolutionary Group, a nationalist insurgent organization. See Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" in *International Security* 37:1 (Summer 2012), 18–20; Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2008), 24.

Anbar province. This Awakening (also called the Anbar Awakening or the Sahwa [64]) was declared in September 2006, and was Iraqi-led. The SOI were an American response to the Awakening, in which tens of thousands of Iraqis nation-wide were armed and paid to protect their neighborhoods in 2007 and 2008. In both cases, armed groups took to the streets as an extra-governmental force to provide local security against terrorism and criminal activity, though in both cases they were integrated into the government, largely at the behest of the United States (the "invited leviathan").

B.   TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE SADDAM HUSSEIN ERA:

Even though Saddam Hussein enjoyed little support outside of his extended family,[65] the fact that he managed to maintain a grip on power at the state level for almost 25 years is a testament to his masterful ability to carefully incentivize, manipulate, and co-opt factions. Through Saddam, the Iraqi tribes,[66] already traditional sources of power, were able to secure local control, prestige, financial incentives, and even weapons—in exchange for acquiescence to his rule.

Upon taking power in 1968, the Ba'ath party immediately declared itself a platform of modernization, and stood in opposition to the forces of tribalism and tradition.[67] This reinforced decades of rhetoric by previous regimes aimed at destroying the influence that tribes held on society in competition with central governments. When Saddam Hussein seized power in 1979, Ba'ath ideology waned. Saddam was a product of

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[64] Sahwa is translated as "awakening" in Iraqi Arabic.

[65] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*, 3rd ed. (New York: IB Tauris, 2001), 273.

[66] The definition of "tribe" is contentious. It is driven as much by colonial theory as it is by native ideology. I find Richard Tapper's definition useful: "Tribe may be used loosely of a localized group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organization, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct (in terms of customs, dialect or language, and origins); tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader…. Such tribes also form parts of larger, usually regional, political structures of tribes with similar kinds…" Richard Tapper, "Introduction," in Tapper, ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London 1983), cited in Phillip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, "Introduction," in Khoury and Kostiner, ed., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 19.

[67] Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991–1996," *International Journal of Middle-East Studies* 29 (1997), 1.

a more traditional society in Tikrit (he was part of the Albu Nasser tribe, a sub-tribe of the Dulaym confederation) and never felt culturally connected to the more urbane members of the Ba'ath.[68]

Despite the reality that Iraqi tribes have historically disdained the "flabby serpent" of central government,[69] tribalism became a traditional motivation that Saddam used to appeal to Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds, and he used it to mobilize the Iraqi population during the Iran-Iraq war.[70]   Not only was Saddam pre-disposed to look favorably on the influence these tribes could wield inside Iraq, but when the tribes themselves resisted the Iranian military during the Iraq-Iran war,[71] Saddam openly recognized this coercive force that he could co-opt in support of his regime. He went so far as to portray himself as a paramount sheikh. This was critical because after the disastrous invasion of Kuwait and the intifadah that occurred thereafter, in which many Ba'ath officials were killed throughout Iraq, Saddam sought to re-exert control by empowering traditional networks.[72]

Control of the populace became even more critical after the disastrous invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent defeat of the Iraqi military at the hands of the U.S. military. At the end of Desert Storm, many Shia, encouraged by the United States, rose up against Saddam's regime. Many rural people throughout Iraq stayed silent, waiting to see how strong the state response was before they chose sides.[73]   Some tribes seized the opportunity generated by rebellion and demonstrated their loyalty to the regime by

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[68] Williamson Murray and Major-General Robert H. Scales, Jr, *The Iraq War: A Military History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 25; Eric Davis*, Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 239.

[69] Hanna Batatu, "Of the Diversity of the Iraqis, the Incohesiveness of Their Society, and Their Progress in the Monarchic Period toward a Consolidated Political Structure," in Albert Hourani, Phillip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson, ed., *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* (London: IB Touris and Co, 1993), 504.

[70] Davis*, Memories of State*, 173–4.

[71] Ariel I. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Press, 2011), 86.

[72] Davis, *Memories of State*, 239.

[73] Baram postulates that many of the rural Iraqis refused to join in the intifadah because it occurred in March, when the harvest was about to occur. See Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 10.

spearheading attempts to put down these rebels.[74] Even some Shia tribes supported Saddam in repelling the resistance.[75] Saddam reciprocated tribal assistance in the preservation of his regime by appointing tribal sheikhs to serve as government officials in the provinces.[76] Ba'athist order was subverted as many officials who were killed in the revolts were then replaced by functionaries who gained their influence through the power their tribe received from the Saddam regime. International sanctions, a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, had an enormous effect on the regime. As a result, Saddam relied more intensely on the tribes, in some locations ceding local law and order as well as tax collection responsibilities to the tribes. He transferred "arms and ammunition, vehicles, and logistical support as payment for services rendered."[77] In addition, sheikhs received land and money for local development and arms (including heavy weapons like howitzers) for the purpose of maintaining local militias.[78] Some tribes celebrated this relationship with the regime, even erecting road-signs declaring that land alongside highways in the northern part of the state was tribal territory (notably the Dulaym).[79]

This relationship was necessary for the regime, which struggled under economic sanctions and continued uprisings throughout the 1990s; they lacked the resources to exert control throughout the entirety of the state and Saddam lacked trust in many of his forces. By endorsing Saddam, tribal leaders saw the opportunity to develop and exert influence at the local level. In this way, Saddam was able to create networks of patronage between himself and the tribes, empowering a group that existed outside of the "official" Iraqi state organization.[80] Saddam formalized this relationship with the creation of an Office of Tribal Affairs and a High Council of Tribal Chiefs (a cabinet-level position),

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[74] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 246.

[75] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 8–9.

[76] Davis, *Memories of State*, 239.

[77] Robert Looney, "Beyond the Iraq Study Group: The Elusive Goal of Sustained Growth," *Strategic Insights* 4:2 (March 2007), 6.

[78] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 13.

[79] Stephen J. Glain, *Mullahs, Merchants, and Militants: The Economic Collapse of the Arab World* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 223.

[80] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 162–3.

through which he elevated some tribes to positions of greater influence, including the appointment of individuals to positions of leadership in tribes which they had not otherwise earned according to tribal precepts.[81] This created a level of fragmentation inside the tribes that is still not fully understood, though it clearly failed to destroy the tribes as a powerful social force.

This is not to say that all tribes were unstinting supporters of Saddam Hussein. In the 1990s there were at least four different revolts by military units largely comprised of three specific tribes—the Ubayd, Dulaym, and Jabbour, all of which are predominantly Sunni—which were put down by other security forces.[82] As such, Saddam began to rely more on smaller tribes who were less likely to pose a threat to him,[83] but the patronage networks ran both ways. It was difficult to entirely extricate his public support from some tribes and transfer it to others without degrading his own prestige or the level of support he received from tribal leaders.

By the late 1990s, the tribes had taken on very public policing duties throughout the state. For instance, armed tribesmen were posted throughout the streets of Baghdad in 1998 during tensions between Iraq and the United States over Saddam's refusal to open weapons sites to international inspectors.[84] Even inside the regime, urban Iraqis lost influence while Iraqis with rural backgrounds dominated politics in Baghdad. The Jubouri tribe (a Sunni Arab tribe from the "Sunni triangle" north of Mosul to Tikrit) dominated the highest levels of the military and that, with the exception of one individual, no one from Baghdad, Basra, or Mosul served in the highest levels of Saddam's regime.[85] Some tribes had assumed so much power that despite the

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[81] Kimberly Marten, *Warlords: Strong-Arm Brokers in Weak States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 154.

[82] Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, 307.

[83] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 6.

[84] Faleh A. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1969–1998," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod, ed., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2003), 96.

[85] Isam al-Kafaji, "War as a Vehicle for the Rise and Demise of a State-Controlled Society: The Case of Ba'thist Iraq," in Steven Hydemann, ed., *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 182.

authoritarian nature of the regime, they were able to prey upon the population. The highway between Amman, Jordan, and Baghdad (through Anbar province) became notorious for armed bands from the Dulaym tribe who raided travelers in "broad daylight."[86] Criminal activity is consistent with significant elements of the Albu Fahd and Albu Mahal sub-tribes, both from the Dulaym confederation, who historically dominate regional smuggling networks.[87] Under Saddam, these tribes found legitimation for their historical proclivity toward the control of local criminal enterprise.

Saddam pursued strategies designed to split individuals from kinship groups, or elevate one kinship group over others, because he was determined to remain in power and had a tendency to view internal threats as the most dangerous to his regime. Baram noted, "(e)ven though this may indeed be a partial return to tribal norms in the tribal areas, this trend threaten[ed] when it permeates into the cities to become the undoing of the workings of the state."[88] These groups, composed of tribes and strong-men, posed a troublesome dynamic for Saddam—on one hand, they degraded his power and influence and posed a continual threat in Iraq's hinterlands, but on the other, he needed them to maintain whatever semblance of control he could maintain. It is probably not a stretch to say that U.S. forces, in 2003, did not understand this dynamic or the true influence that many of the tribes and their leaders wielded throughout Iraq.

C.   THE U.S. INVASION

The Sunni group identity had "always been intertwined with the state,"[89] and with the rapid destruction of that state, their identity was altered. Furthermore, the influence of significant Sunni leaders and state elites was destroyed by a series of political decisions implemented by the United States

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[86] Jabar, "Sheikhes and Ideologues," 97.

[87] Lin Todd, *Iraq Tribal Study: Al Anbar Governate—The Albu Fahd Tribe, The Albu Mahal Tribe, and the Albu Issa Tribe* (Global Resources Group, 2006), 143, 157–8.

[88] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 21.

[89] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 148.

On 16 May 2003, Paul Bremer issued Order No. 1, "De-Bathification of Iraqi Society," essentially outlawing the top four levels of the Ba'ath Party and forbidding them from posts in the soon-to-established Iraqi government.[90]   In the process of alienating the most experienced members of the formal economy, the United States disbanded the only established bureaucracy the Iraqi state had. These individuals were not only party functionaries and experienced bureaucrats, but were also school-teachers, electricians, doctors and nurses, and police.[91]   Many Sunnis felt the de-Bathification policies were aimed directly at limiting their own influence while elevating Shia power.[92]

The United States compounded the damage on 23 May 2003 when Bremer issued Order No. 2, "Dissolution of Entities," which disbanded the Iraqi military, defense ministries, and intelligence agencies.[93]   Even though many of these individuals had deserted, been captured, killed, or had otherwise disappeared from public view, the law meant none of them were paid or compensated, nor were retired officers paid their pensions, nor were military weapons collected in an organized manner. Iraqis throughout the state were incredulous and deeply frustrated. U.S. military officers and State Department officials were also exasperated as they received no warning and had no tools to offset the order. A plan to pay many of the soldiers, and especially the retirees, was hastily put into place.[94]

In the space of less than two weeks, by seeking to "purge Iraq of Saddam Hussein's malign influence,"[95] U.S. policy had managed to disband the most significant functioning formal actors in the economy and the state government, as well as turn hundreds of thousands of trained, and in many cases, armed fighters, including their officers and strategists, out into the streets. The United States "showed little knowledge

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[90] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 549–550.

[91] Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 3.

[92] W. Andrew Terrill, *Lessons of the Iraqi De-Ba'athification Program for Iraq's Future and the Arab Revolutions* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 16.

[93] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 554–555.

[94] Ibid., 553–556.

[95] Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 489.

of Iraqi society, the reasons why people had joined the Ba'th party, or even the role of the armed forces under Saddam Hussein."[96] Iraq already suffered from significant unemployment, infrastructure degradation, and lack of order. Crime, exacerbated by Saddam's decision immediately before the U.S. invasion to release 200,000 convicts,[97] exploded. In this environment, it is no surprise that anti-U.S. opinion coalesced. In 2004, two-thirds of the Sunni population believed that the United States had invaded Iraq to humiliate the Sunnis.[98] Sunnis further feared for their safety from Shia and Kurdish elites and largely Shia security forces, who sought retribution for perceived injustices after decades of repression at the hands of Saddam.[99] Militias and armed groups sprang up throughout Iraq, led and organized by mostly non-state elites, attempting to protect vulnerable populations in ethnically-dominant neighborhoods, property, and access to resources throughout the confines of the state. Most of the major exile parties returned with their own armed groups. Two of the most rapid and most powerful militias to be established were Hizbollah in the southern marshes and Muqtada al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia. Although JAM was the most powerful, militant, and effective Shia militia, it was by no means the only militia organized by a religious figure in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion.[100]

With the collapse of government power, already diminished state-controlled dispute resolution and routine function of social control disintegrated. Already influential because of years of Saddam's empowerment, and because people understood sheikhs to be locally important and traditionally influential, much of society rapidly reverted back to utilizing the traditional tribal networks to decide issues. As one sheik noted, "[t]he tribes have always become stronger when the government is weak, and weaker when the

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[96] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 283.

[97] Ahmed Hashim, "Terrorism and Complex Warfare in Iraq," in Ramzy Mardini, ed*., Volatile Landscape: Iraq and Its Insurgent Movements* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2010), 19.

[98] Zaki Chehab*, Inside the Resistance: Reporting from Iraq's Danger Zone* (New York: Nation Books, 2005), 138.

[99] Mohammed M. Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 42.

[100] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors*, 88.

government is strong."[101]   The revival of traditional networks required patronage; the sheiks needed (and had received from Saddam) "financial and material rewards to benefit them and that they can hand out to their tribes."[102]   The problem was that, after 2003, the tribes could no longer gain incentives from Saddam's regime, and they had to obtain it elsewhere.

D.   THE ACCENSION OF AL QAEDA IN IRAQ

This chaotic environment was ideal for an organization like Al Qaeda in Iraq to seek and leverage influence among the tribes. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian who reportedly fought against the United States on the side of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2001, relocated to Iraq in 2002, and created a Salafi jihadist organization. He pledged himself and his organization, Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, to Al Qaeda in late 2004 (in the process U.S. analysts re-labeled the organization "Al-Qaeda in Iraq)."[103] Under his leadership, AQI recruited deeply from among the most frustrated individuals inside the disenfranchised Sunni society. AQI also drew a number of fighters from other states which were determined to fight against the U.S. occupation. There was fertile ground in Iraq for organizations like AQI because the "consequent alienation of Sunni Arabs from the emerging post-Saddam structure helped create a hospitable environment for the transnational jihadis whose interests came to converge with those of Iraqi nationalists and former Baathists committed to driving the United States out of Iraq."[104] Jihadist organizations like AQI needed Iraqi tribal society to help shelter them in their war against the Iraqi government and the United States, and manipulated them in any way possible after the U.S. invasion in 2003.

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[101] Rad Al-Hamdani, interview by Ilhami Al-Maliji, "Suqut Baghdad al-sari mufaja'a mudhhila!" [The Rapid Fall of Baghdad Was a Stunning Surprise], *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), 3 July 2004, cited in Norman Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government: Lessons and Prospects for Iraq's Unstable Triangle*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011), 3.

[102] Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 106.

[103] Craig Whitlock, "Al Zarqawi's Biography," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2006.

[104] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 148.

Many Sunnis feared the Shia-dominated central government in Baghdad, and the fact that the United States seemed to support the Shia-led government over Sunni aspirations drove many Sunnis to accommodate extremist groups like Al Qaeda.[105] These accommodations were originally undertaken in an air of desperation, in order to hedge the influence of a Shia majority who was influenced by Iran, according to the thinking of many Sunnis in the rural parts of the country.[106] Many Sunnis in Anbar province, at least from 2003 through 2006, saw U.S. forces not just as occupiers but also as witting or unwitting stooges of the Shia government.

Many tribes—having the "natural reluctance of conservative Islamists and nationalists to submit to foreign infidels"[107]—resisted the U.S. occupation, motivated by resentment, lack of political and economic opportunity, and humiliation. Some tribal leaders played leadership roles in the insurgency.[108] After 2003, support among the Sunni population for the insurgency was very strong; polling indicates that over three-quarters of the population of Anbar province considered the central government in Baghdad illegitimate in 2006.[109]

Regardless of their motivations or differences, cooperation evolved between the tribes and radical jihadists, though the true depths of this cooperation remain shadowy. The jihadists needed shelter, local knowledge, and material resources that could be gained from the disenfranchised Sunni population, while tribes needed funding, influence, and prestige.[110] It must be stressed, however, that Zarqawi's AQI provided for itself financially. Al Qaeda was never a monolithic establishment in either organization

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[105] Najim Abed Al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *Prism* 2:1 (December 2010), 8.

[106] Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 78.

[107] Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, 104.

[108] Alfred B. Connable, "Intelligence Assessment in Late 2005 and 2006," interviewed by SSGt Bradford A. Wineman, in CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 127.

[109] Carter Malkasian, "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas* 5 (Summer 2007).

[110] Ahmed Hashim, "Foreign Involvement in the Insurgency," in Ramzy Mardini, ed*., Volatile Landscape: Iraq and Its Insurgent Movements* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2010), 15.

or economics, and AQI, like Al Qaeda cells throughout the world, was forced to undertake a variety of moneymaking ventures in order to fund its operations. In Anbar, this meant AQI engaged in wide-scale theft and re-sale of stolen goods (especially automobiles and expensive commercial items like generators, construction equipment, and industrial items) and items stolen from victims of their violence. Their revenue stream in 2006 constituted nearly $400,000 a month.[111] Reports indicated AQI was so financially successful in Anbar that it transferred funds out of the province to bolster the resources of cells in other provinces.[112]

Even the nationalist and Ba'athist insurgent organizations cooperated with AQI in order to gain logistical, financial, and manpower support.[113] To ensure wide-spread cooperation with AQI, those who resisted, including tribal leaders, were assassinated.[114] The central government exerted weak influence; in 2005, Ramadi had only 12 percent of their authorized police force in place (fewer than half of whom regularly showed up for work).[115] The Sunni population as whole was increasingly intimidated by Al Qaeda in 2003 through 2004 and 2005 into 2006.

At the end of summer 2006, the senior Marine intelligence officer in Anbar province concluded, "AQI is the dominant organization of influence in al-Anbar, surpassing nationalist insurgents, the Iraqi Government, and MNF [Multi-National Forces] in its ability to control the day-to-day life of the average Sunni."[116] The assessment was that AQI simply could not be defeated in Anbar without a radical change in either resources or strategy.

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[111] Benjamin Bahney, Howard J. Shatz, Carroll Ganier, Renny McPherson, and Barbara Sude, *An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of al-Qa'ida in Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2010), 34–9.

[112] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 244.

[113] Hashim, "Terrorism and Complex Warfare in Iraq," 21.

[114] Neil Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* 88:2 (Mar/Apr 2008), 42.

[115] Ibid., 44.

[116] "Appendix A: COL. Devlin's Intelligence Assessment," in Ricks, *The Gamble*, 331–335. In the same document COL Devlin argued an Anbar-based paramilitary force might pose an effective alternative to Baghdad-controlled forces, though at no point does he refer to Sahwa or what was just emerging at that point (autumn 2006) in Ramadi.

E. FRICTION DEVELOPS BETWEEN AQI AND THE SUNNI POPULATION

As time passed, other groups within the insurgency became increasingly frustrated with AQI propaganda, as well as tactics to exert control over the insurgency. AQI never dominated the insurgency in terms of manning or, likely, volume of attacks, and most estimates put AQI at very small percentage of the overall insurgency.[117] Nonetheless, the influence AQI exerted was massive, especially as the insurgency grew in intensity. An Iraqi intelligence officer estimated that by 2006 up to 60 percent of Iraqi resistance organizations were working with AQI.[118] This was problematic because, as David Kilcullen, a COIN scholar who served as an advisor to General David Petraeus, points out, around 70 percent of Iraqi insurgents were motivated "defensively, out of a sense of threat and because of a belief that they had no alternative but to fight to the death to protect their communities in a terrifying and brutal environment."[119] AQI was offensive in nature, and increasingly so into 2006. This dichotomy put many insurgents increasingly into conflict with AQI. By 2005, rumors became public when some nationalist resistance groups let it be known that they disapproved of AQI's incessant targeting not just of Iraqi security forces but also of Iraq's Shia civilians.[120] AQI further eroded nationalist collaboration by forming the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in late 2006, declaring AQI the leading organization in the insurgency and demanding that all other organizations pledge loyalty to AQI. AQI further intended to establish a return to a caliphate and declared it to exist in western Iraq. Their desire to establish a caliphate in Iraq clearly meant, to the rest of the insurgency, not only would there be no inclusion into the Iraqi state at all, Iraq would cease to exist. AQI over-reached by failing to understand

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[117] Andrew Tilghman, "The Myth of AQI," *Washington Monthly*, August 2007. In this article, discussing various military, agency, and analyst estimates, the author notes that the percentage of AQ in terms of the total insurgency varies from 2 percent at the low end to 15 percent at the high end.

[118] Colonel Said Muhammed Muad al-Fahadawi, "Interview 13," interview with COL GaryW. Montgomery and CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams in McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 2: Iraqi Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 196–209.

[119] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 127. Kilcullen indicates this statistic came from detainee surveys.

[120] Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, "We Don't Need al-Qaida," *The Guardian*, October 26, 2005.

the nationalist, anti-U.S., secular nature of most of the resistance fighters.[121] This caused the undercurrent of resentment against AQI to harden and explode into open warfare against AQI.

AQI, whose conservative Salafi perspective on personal and societal behavior widely differed from that of the average Iraqi Sunni, believed it was important to control the human population through a strict adherence to sharia law—sharia law according to AQI's harsh ideals. This included whipping those who consumed alcohol, breaking the fingers of smokers, and banning certain mundane products in stores because of perceived morality.[122] This ham-fisted application of sharia law frustrated many Iraqi Sunnis, who were generally more secular than the hard-core foreign advocates who came to Iraq to fight jihad. Many perceived that AQI had evolved into a bigger threat than the United States. The Sunni population "reached a level of fear, desperation and exhaustion that made them amenable to having the American military in their neighborhoods. That had become a lesser evil than the presence of Al Qaeda extremists and Shiite militias."[123]

The tribal sheiks, many of whom had supported AQI, also grew disenchanted with AQI's aggressive efforts to exert control over the population. AQI, with its emphasis on social re-organization according to radical Salafi ideals and its deliberate appeal to the most disenfranchised within Iraqi culture, acted as a revolutionary force. Sheik Ali Hatim, a prominent sheik in the Dulaim confederation, claimed AQI appealed to those on the bottom of the tribal hierarchy and attempted to use them to usurp the sheik's proper influence over the tribe.[124] Tribal leaders found the foreign-born nature of much of AQI's leadership nettlesome. Many Iraqi communities were quite insular and sheiks were irritated by seeing young, uneducated Saudis or Jordanians exert influence in villages

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[121] Steven Simon, "The Price of the Surge," *Foreign Affairs* 82:3 (May/June 2008), 61.

[122] Amit R. Paley, "Shift in Tactics Aims to Revive Struggling Insurgency," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2008.

[123] Steven Metz, *Decision-Making in Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007* (Strategic Studies Institute, May 2010), 31.

[124] Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 11.

simply because they were connected to AQI leadership.[125] Furthermore, AQI pursued a policy in Iraq "to marry senior al-Qaeda fighters to local brides. The aim was to sow deep roots in a community. But in Iraqi tribal structure, 'marrying women to strangers, let alone foreigners, is just not done.'"[126] Rather than "sowing deep roots," this marriage policy backfired by leading to deep resentment among many Sunnis, who saw AQI as an increasingly alien and manipulative organization.[127]

Perhaps, most importantly, however, the friction between AQI and the tribes was born out of economic competition in Anbar. Much of this business was of questionable legality. The background of Sheik Abdul Buzaigh Sittarr al-Rishawi aka Abu Risha (hereafter referred as Sheik Sittar Abu Risha), the predominant sheik in the establishment of the Awakening movement, illustrates the friction between the tribes and the AQI-dominated insurgency:

> After the fall of Saddam Hussein, Sittar is said to have made a fortune by nabbing cars moving along the unguarded roads of Anbar Province. As the insurgency began to take shape in Anbar Province in 2003, Sittar extended help to al-Qaeda in Iraq.... A former al Qaeda fighter who spoke to TIME on condition of anonymity says Sittar offered the group cars, safe houses and local guides for the foreign volunteers. But that partnership was short-lived. When insurgents began raiding the highways as a means of fundraising, Sittar and his gang began clashing with insurgents in a turf war.[128]

The tribes historically controlled the black market and AQI's efforts to fund itself placed it in the same markets as the tribes. As such, AQI was disrupting the already shaky

[125] Sheikh Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahran al-Shurji al-Aziz, "Interview Nine," interview with COL GaryW. Montgomery and CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams in McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 2: Iraqi Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 140–1.

[126] Greg Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq,'" Council on Foreign Relations, January 9, 2009.

[127] David Kilcullen, "Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt," *Small Wars Journal*, August 29, 2007.

[128] Mark Kukis, "Turning Iraq's Tribes Against Al-Qaeda," *TIME Magazine*, December 26, 2006. Details are sketchy, but multiple authors (including William Doyle, who paints a very flattering picture of Abu Risha in *A Soldier's Dream*) allege not just Abu Risha, but most Anbar-area sheiks, engaged in criminal enterprises to provide themselves with enough financial sourcing to provide inducements to tribesmen.

sources of revenue, and therefore, patronage, that the tribal elites controlled.[129] The total value of the black market that might have been controlled by the tribes has not been detailed, but there is no doubt that when AQI stole cars and construction equipment, they were interfering not only with the illicit but also the licit trade in which the tribes were involved. Reconstruction contracts, often set up between the United States and companies throughout Iraq, including Anbar province, provided lucrative targets for AQI to conduct "security shake-downs."[130] Many of these companies were owned by tribal leaders and other prominent individuals who lost money to organizations like AQI. Sheik Sittar Abu Risha, like many other formal and informal leaders throughout Iraq, realized after three-and-a-half years of war that alliances with AQI were dangerous and unprofitable.

F.   THE SAHWA EMERGES

The Al Anbar People's Council, composed largely of nationalists, tribal leaders, and businessmen, emerged in the summer of 2005. Led by Nasser al-Fahadawey, the sheikh of the Al-Fahad tribe and himself closely connected to the insurgency,[131] the Council existed as a sort of underground political party, publically organized against AQI, and sheiks from this organization met with leaders in the U.S. military, even including General George W. Casey, who warily attempted to ensure it supported the Anbari government.[132] The Council was undone from within as tribal rivalries and a lack of both resources and resolve made them vulnerable to AQI predation. AQI assassinated tribal leaders and by the beginning of 2006, the Council had fallen apart.[133] Another tribally-oriented organization functioned near the Al-Asad Airbase in western Anbar, but it lacked influence.[134] While numerous members of the population, tribes, and elites

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[129] John A. McCary, "The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives," *The Washington Quarterly* 32:1 (January 2009), 47; Malkasian, "The Thin Blue Line in the Sand."

[130] Hannah Allam, "Insurgents Get a Cut of U.S. Aid to Iraq," *The Seattle Times*, 7 August 2007.

[131] Connable, "Intelligence Assessment," 126–9. Sheikh Nasser al-Fahadewey was assassinated by a Fahad tribesmen in January 2006.

[132] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 174–5.

[133] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," 42.

[134] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 242.

hated AQI and desired to re-exert traditional power structures and to strengthen their socio-economic power, it was not possible in Anbar, until 2006.

By 2006, many tactical U.S. military units displayed the innovation and initiative to conduct operations more consistent with population-centered COIN operations.[135] Strategically, the United States had abandoned its "Iraqization" policy by 2007, realizing such a policy of training the Iraqi Army to take over the counterinsurgent fight could not be successful while violence was at such high levels, while the Iraqi Army as a whole could barely conduct operations in a competent manner, and when Shias and Sunnis were at each other's throats. Inside the U.S. military, after years of conflict in Iraq, "[f]rom enlisted Soldiers and Marines to general officers, there was deeper experience; better equipment and training; better cultural and situational awareness; better doctrine; and better tactics, techniques, and procedures."[136] Ben Connable, a Marine intelligence officer with two deployments in Anbar by the time the Sahwa occured, argued the U.S. military took several years to gain the nuanced understanding of social and economic dynamics of Anbar province, especially when it came to tribal politics. With a few exceptions, before mid-2006 U.S. forces were unable to engage Anbaris, in language they understood and with incentives they responded to, in terms of the issues they were most motivated by.[137] By mid-2006, forces in Anbar better understood the terrain they were operating in. This evolution in understanding made the U.S. military, especially the units aligned in Anbar province, exactly the types of creative, confident, and solution-oriented units the tribes *would* find success with.

The unit that would partner so effectively with the tribes during the "Al Anbar Awakening" was the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division (1–1 AD) under command of COL Sean MacFarland. When the brigade arrived in Ramadi in May 2006, the city

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[135] James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005–2007* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 10.

[136] Metz, "Decision-Making in Operation Iraqi Freedom," 40.

[137] Connable, "Intelligence Assessment," 123–125. The idea that the U.S. forces in Anbar were tactically and politically heavy-handed and culturally ignorant during the early phase of the conflict, but that units eventually acted with a more nuanced and astute capacity, is a constant theme expressed by nearly every Iraqi interviewed in *Iraqi Perspectives*. See McWilliams and Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 2: Iraqi Perspectives*.

averaged three times more attacks per capita than any other location in Iraq, and was renowned as one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq.[138] COL John Gronski, who commanded the U.S. brigade in Ramadi before the 1–1AD arrived, told General Casey he would need three times as many forces to truly control Ramadi. The 1–1 AD was bolstered with additional forces, including two extra battalions, before it arrived in Ramadi, which almost doubled its size.[139] Undoubtedly, the increased volume of troops and assets than the 1–1AD brought to Ramadi, compared to previous units, greatly helped in terms of the ability of U.S. forces to develop profitable relationships with Anbaris.

The 1–1 AD found itself in a highly kinetic fight against local insurgents, so they aggressively pursued these insurgents with all the weapons at their disposal. They also made a powerful example to the local population, renting or purchasing homes and protecting them so they could reside and patrol the neighborhoods where insurgents had previously reigned, and telling elites that they would not leave until the insurgents were dead.[140]

As the 1–1AD pursued their own offensive in the summer of 2006, segments of the tribes were mobilized in open combat against the threat posed by AQI. Thawar Al-Anbar (TAA) emerged as a local, anti-AQI, counter-insurgent organization in that spring of 2006. It was apparently funded and led by tribal elements which were determined to eliminate members of AQI in the Ramadi area. Multiple murders in the Ramadi area were attributed to TAA and the victims were identified by local elites as AQI fighters. It was clear there was a violent, if underground, tribal resistance against AQI in the Ramadi area. U.S. forces knew the TAA existed, but they did not assist it.[141] At this time, the efforts to defeat the AQI-led insurgency were determined on the parts of both the Iraqis and the United States, but they were still uncoordinated and marked by a lack of recognition of interest or trust.

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[138] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 42; Connable, "Intelligence Assessment," 131–2.

[139] Bernard and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 244–5.

[140] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 43–6.

[141] William Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream: Captain Travis Patriquin and the Awakening of Iraq* (New York: New American Library, 2011), 139–143. Doyle indicates that at least some Americans felt Abu Risha himself may have led the TAA (p42).

MacFarland went to the tribal and political elite and shared his vision of improvement in Ramadi. Many of the tribes wanted to support MacFarland, who, along with members of his staff, struck them as honorable, accessible, and deeply interested in what the tribes had to say. Sheik Khaled Arak Ehtami Al-Alayawia of the Abu Ali Jassim tribe and Sheik Sittar abu Risha in particular supported the 1–1AD. These two sheiks, especially Sheik Sittar abu Risha, a young, scotch-drinking, pistol-wearing chieftain of a relatively minor tribe with CIA contacts, a smuggling trade, and a flair for the dramatic,[142] were charismatic and had been able to secure power and influence in the province for themselves after numerous other sheiks had been assassinated or fled the province.

In the summer of 2006, COL MacFarland prevailed upon the Ramadi sheiks to assist in building up the size and quality of the local Iraqi Police (IP) forces. The tribal sheiks engaged 1–1 AD as soon as they arrived in Ramadi to set up armed, local militias,[143] and the brigade saw the IP as a worthy alternative. (COL MacFarland, clearly, was not an immediate believer in the value of locally-raised armed militias.) Recruiting was rapidly successful as over 250 police recruits joined in July alone (CIA cash bonuses to recruits likely assisted in establishing the rapid turnout).[144] In terms of "official" Iraq security forces and the 1–1 AD, great pressure was put upon AQI. The TAA were also targeting AQI in the region.

The tangible effect these efforts had on AQI in the summer of 2006 is difficult to determine. What is known is that by mid-August 2006, AQI released anti-TAA propaganda in several Ramadi areas, and also threatened the tribes who supported the Iraqi government or U.S. forces. In response, Sheik Khaled Arak Ehtami Al-Alayawia confronted Al-Qaeda fighters. He was killed and "[i]n a gross violation of tribal and Islamic custom requiring a swift burial,"[145] hidden from his relatives and left exposed to

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[142] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 251; Michaels, *A Chance in Hell*, 86–94; Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 47–8.

[143] Anthony E. Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," *Military Review* 90:1 (Jan/Feb 2010), 85.

[144] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 250.

[145] Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream*, 143.

the elements by being abandoned in a field for several days. Earlier on the same day that Al-Alayawia was assassinated, AQI conducted a complex attack incorporating a suicide bomber on a local IP station, which largely failed in its attempt to intimidate the local population and local police.[146]

Sheik Sittar was outraged by AQI's activities and was clearly empowered by U.S. forces in the region. Though Sheik Khaled was not related to him, Sittar"'ha[d] lost enough family members that he was ready to throw away caution,'" MacFarland said.[147] Over the following weeks, Sittar met with a large number of sheiks from the region, elites who rallied to his words. "If we don't stand up together, Al-Qaeda is going to pick us apart one by one, like they did last time," he told them soon after the assassination of Sheik Khaled.[148] On 9 September 2006, with COL MacFarland and a few other Americans in attendance, Sheik Sittar held a meeting at his compound with over 40 sheiks as well as the previous Anbar governor, representing 11 of the region's 21 tribes. The formation of the Sahwa Al- Anbar campaign and the Al-Anbar Emergency Council was announced.[149] On 14 September the Al-Anbar Emergency Council held its first meeting and released points, including a return to "honorable status" for those sheiks who rejected Al-Qaeda, forming Anbar's security forces (including IP, IA, and local militias) completely with Anbaris who have been approved by the tribes, providing security on all roads and highways, and opening dialogue with ex-Ba'athists.[150]

Though MacFarland officially disavowed involvement in any U.S. interaction with the 1920s Revolutionary Brigade (a less radical and more nationalist insurgent organization than AQI) in the next several months, Sittar admitted privately to U.S. officers he had met with insurgent leaders and fighters, who had vowed to join the tribes

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[146] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame,* 250–1.

[147] Ricks, *The Gamble*, 66.

[148] Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream*, 145.

[149] Ibid., 156.

[150] Michael E. Silverman, *Awakening Victory: How Iraqi Tribes and American Troops Reclaimed al Anbar Province and Defeated al Qaeda in Iraq* (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2011), 75.

against AQI and to stop violence against the United States.[151] The involvement of nationalist groups in the resistance is corroborated by another of the pivotal Sahwa sheikhs, Sheik Aifan Sadun al-Issawi, who also stated many AQI fighters quit and joined the Sahwa forces.[152]

The Sahwa Al-Anbar movement rapidly gained numerous adherents. By October 2006, MacFarland estimated that almost all of the tribes near Ramadi, especially around the north and west, had affiliated themselves with Sahwa Al-Anbar and were in open warfare with AQI.[153] AQI continued attacking coalition forces as well as IP, IA, and tribal forces; attacks remained high throughout the summer and into the fall. Some villages outside of Ramadi were particularly hard-hit, and some tribes tried to avoid taking sides in order to avoid casualties.

In November 2006, a massive assault by AQI fighters on a neutral tribe, the Abu Soda, was repelled with the use of rapidly deployed U.S. air support and ground maneuver forces, causing the Abu Soda to abandon pretense at neutrality and aggressively join the tribal confederation.[154] Called the "Battle of Sufia," this clash re-energized the tribes and showed them the United States would come to their aid if they just asked for it—even if they had not allied themselves with the movement yet.

The tribes also supported official local security forces, especially as Baghdad's rules were altered to support the tribal dynamics in Anbar. In a six-month period, over 4,000 locals (90 percent of whom were vouched for by the tribal leaders) joined the Iraqi Police to serve directly in Ramadi. The Iraqi Army was able to accomplish an almost impossible feat in the same summer—recruiting Anbaris to serve in the Iraqi Army, who

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[151] Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream*, 158. Doyle further contends that a significant numbers of ex-insurgents who had quit the fight against the Americans because of Abu Risha's influence joined the IPs during successful recruiting drives in the following year.

[152] Sheikh Aifan Sadun al-Issawi, "Interview 6," interview by COL Gary W. Montgomery and CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams, in McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 2: Iraqi Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 102.

[153] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 49.

[154] John R. Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom: America's Long War with Iraq* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 202.

had enlisted to serve under a special dispensation secured by 1–1AD so that they could serve in Anbar.[155] By 2008, there would be over 24,000 police in Anbar province, largely at the behest of tribal leaders.[156] Tribesmen received prestigious jobs with regular pay. Selected by the tribal elites, they served as the faces of authority in tribally-dominated areas. Coalition forces had incentivized tribes by giving tribes sources of patronage.

By the beginning of 2007, over 13,000 young men had pledged themselves to the Al-Anbar Emergency Council.[157] Those local tribesmen who could not read and write (and were therefore not eligible to serve as police or soldiers) worked various security functions for the tribes, aligned in "reserve battalions" commanded by tribal leaders like Sheik Sittar Abu Risha. U.S. forces, understanding that tribesmen needed to work and be paid wages to stay on the side of the Sahwa (and by extension, the United States), paid them. In many cases, U.S. forces further equipped and armed these forces, and provided training to them. In some cases, these forces resembled "private armies" under the command of local Sawha commanders. Sheik Sittar Abu Risha himself worked on transforming the Sahwa into a political party and came into increasing conflict with the Ramadi governor—and, in a sort of sweetheart deal, was allowed to appoint the deputy governor.[158]

By December 2006, the death rate for U.S. forces in Anbar province began to decline and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) sophistication evaporated—a sign that either the supply chain had been disrupted or skilled bomb-makers were no longer working within the cells that still fought the United States.[159] Overall, attacks dropped from 25 a day in summer 2006 to four per day in spring 2007, a decline of over

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[155] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 44–5.

[156] Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 35.

[157] Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, 202.

[158] James V. Soriano, "Transition to Iraqi Control, Part III," interview by COL Gary W. Montgomery and CW4 Timothy S.McWilliams, in McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 277–8, 280.

[159] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 71.

80 percent.[160] Cache exploitations increased[161]—which meant the population, no longer intimidated by AQI, was willing and able to provide good information to security forces.

The insurgency itself was drained by the personnel requirements needed for the Sahwa. James Soriano, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leader in Anbar from 2006–2009, indicated tribal engagement began with the hopes of removing the young tribesmen from attacking Marines in Anbar province.[162] Thousands of unemployed young men joined the IPs, the IA, and the local militias in Anbar during the Sahwa. This was critical because AQI considered the tribesmen the backbone of the insurgency in Anbar.[163] The sheikhs gave tribesmen the orders to fight in 2006 and 2007 when it came to supporting the tribes and resisting AQI.[164] If the Sahwa was "purely driven by the tribes and the sheikhs,"[165] then the sheikhs had enormous power over the strength of the insurgency.

"Their interests align with us—none of them is making any money during the war," MacFarland said in 2007. He further stated that tribes, "like the Mafia," owned many construction and contracting businesses in Anbar.[166] By spring 2007, reconstruction contracts were vetted not just by local politicians, but increasingly through tribes. The Ramadi mayor was removed and a new leader—deemed appropriate by the tribal elite as well as U.S. forces—was appointed.[167] Even more critical to the success of

[160] Brian Katulis, Peter Juul, and Ian Moss, "Awakening to New Dangers in Iraq: Sunni 'Allies' Pose an Emerging Threat," Center for American Progress, February 2008, 4.

[161] Multi-National Force-Iraq, "Charts to Accompany the Testimony of General David H. Petraeus," 10–11 September 2007. Caches are discussed on slide 6.

[162] Soriano, "Transition to Iraqi Control, Part III," 282.

[163] Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 6.

[164] MG Walter E. Gaskins, Jr., "Turning the Tide, Part 1," interview by COL Michael D. Visconage, in CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 220.

[165] MG Richard C. Zilmer, "The Shift to Counterinsurgency," interview by LTC Kurtis P.Wheeler in CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 150.

[166] Tony Perry, "One Man's War: Sunni Sheik's War on the Insurgency," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 2007.

[167] Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens," 51.

the movement were contracts to construct or renovate markets, businesses, utility services, military facilities, roads, schools, and hospitals with which tribal elites were able to employ tribesmen and fund economic development.[168] Because of U.S. financial support, they were able to reinvigorate the patronage networks. Social power was restored to the tribes in a manner the sheiks supported, and they gained the clear backing of the U.S. military. U.S. forces were little interested in the personal behavior of most Sunnis in Anbar province and were tolerant of revenue-generating activities, as long as peace and prosperity appeared to increase in a measureable manner.[169] The sheiks were back in control of the day-to-day life of their tribes, which was what they desired.

G.   THE U.S. RESPONDS AND THE SONS OF IRAQ ARE BORN

With 2007 came "the Surge." The Bush administration, increasingly concerned in 2006 that it was losing the war in Iraq, announced that U.S. forces would be heavily reinforced, new tactics would be utilized, and a new commander, General David Petraeus, would lead U.S. forces in Iraq. It was obvious that 1–1AD under COL MacFarland had done something impressive, a reversal in less than a year from a "lost province" to one which was the shining example of successful COIN. GEN David Petraeus met with COL MacFarland and sought to incorporate lessons learned in Anbar province to the COIN strategy the United States would pursue aggressively in 2007.

The U.S. military immediately grasped the appeal of organizations like the Sahwa militias. Commanders everywhere went to tribal leaders, local businessmen, ex-military leaders, politicians, and other elites and endeavored to set up local security organizations. In January 2007, there were 12,000 SOI, mostly Sahwa militiamen, on the U.S. payroll. By May 2008, there were reportedly over 105,000 SOI.[170] Concurrently, by spring 2008, attacks across the country had declined by a reported 62 percent compared to a year

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[168] MG John R. Allen, "Turning the Tide, Part II," interview by CW4 Timothy S. McWilliams, in McWilliams and LTC Kurtis P. Wheeler, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2009), 230; Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 39.

[169] Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, 61.

[170] Glenn D. Furbish, ed., "Sons of Iraq Program: Results Were Uncertain and Financial Controls Were Weak," Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Construction, SIGAR 11–010, January 28, 2011, 4.

earlier. [171] SOI were generally paid an average of U.S. $10 a day with an overall cost to the United States of $370 billion from 2007 to 2009. [172] Retired GEN Barry McCaffrey spoke in support of the SOI in 2007, saying, "'[w]e can pay them that [$10 a day] for 10 years if we had to….Better we provide an infusion of cash where we're keeping a local night watchman for us on duty than we conduct combat operations.'" [173]

The Bush administration deployed over 20,000 more troops to Iraq in 2007 to bolster existing troop numbers. Combining the SOI with the increased number of U.S. troops meant security forces seemed to be everywhere. The Iraqi civilian population provided intelligence on insurgents, provided feedback on operations, and gave information on what the population needed. Much of this data was funneled through the SOI; "[t]he info we were getting from the CLCs [Concerned Local Citizens] was phenomenal," claimed a U.S. Army brigade operations officer in 2007. [174]

The emergence of these groups throughout Iraq was dependent on local conditions and local personalities. In Diyala province, for example, the "Baqouba Guardians" operated, less tribally-oriented but no less effectively, notably killing several AQI fighters, including two suicide bombers, in a clash on 15 August 2007. In Taji at the same time, the "Neighorhood Watch" numbered 500 and was more aligned with tribal leaders; sheiks were reportedly held accountable by U.S. leadership to enforce standards as well as ensuring logistical criteria were met. [175]

The Farsan Al Rafidayn, or "Knights of the Two Rivers," was a CLC group organized in Ameriyah, Baghdad, a predominately Sunni neighborhood with a long connection to the insurgency. [176] They emerged from the split of nationalist insurgents (in

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[171] "Anti-Qaeda Fighters in Street Protest Against City Police Chief," *Agence France Presse*, February 4, 2008.

[172] Furbish, "Sons of Iraq Program," 1.

[173] Guy Raz, "Military Officials Disagree on the Effect of the Surge," National Public Radio, January 8, 2008.

[174] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 170.

[175] Will Waddell, "Local Security: A Grassroots Effort, August 27, 2007," Backgrounder #5, Iraq Project, Institute for the Study of War, August 2007, 1.

[176] Dan Murphy and Awadh al-Tee, "In the Struggle for Iraq, Tug-of-War Over One Baghdad Neighborhood," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 6. 2006.

this case, Jaish Al-Islami or JAI) from AQI, and were "conspicuously non-tribal in nature."[177]   Enormous successes were attributed to their tactical effectiveness. In Adamiyah, only a few blocks away to the northeast, citizens were "enraged by the news that terrorists had killed two relatives of a local sheik, [and] stormed the Abu Hanifa mosque, a known terrorist base. Subsequent operations allowed coalition forces to detain approximately 50 suspected terrorists and seize five large caches of weapons."[178] Thus was born Adamiyah's own militia, the Critical Infrastructure Guard Force. In addition, a SOI unit south of Baghdad was commanded by a former Saddam-era general.[179] Although it was rarely articulated openly, most of the militias had deep connections to the ongoing insurgency.[180]   That is, many of the manning rosters of the various militias were composed of men who just yesterday had emplaced IEDs against American forces or had intimidated local populations.

U.S. forces generally viewed the SOI and affiliated militias with something akin to respect—and relief. There was no denying that violence declined in areas where the SOI were stood up, but the correlation was difficult to prove. Were attacks down, for example, because unemployed men were now standing guard over their areas, so insurgents were afraid to attack there any longer?   Or were attacks down because insurgents were literally paid more by the United States than AQI (or other insurgent organizations) could pay them, and they therefore quit fighting, and were now standing "guard?"   There is likely truth to each side of this answer.

If there was specific guidance or an order given to form or organize them from a specific U.S. military headquarters, there is official little record of such. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Construction (SIGAR), who was tasked in 2010 to conduct an investigation into the usage of Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)

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[177] Will Waddell, "The Knights of Amiriya: Concerned Citizens in Baghdad," Backgrounder #10, Iraq Project, Institute for the Study of War, September 2007, 1.

[178] Will Waddell, "Reconciliation Movements In and Around Baghdad," Backgrounder #11, Iraq Project, Institute for the Study of War, September 2007, 1.

[179] David Mays, "Al Qaeda in Iraq Losing, Thanks to Concerned Local Citizens," *American Forces Press*, September 28, 2007.

[180] Katulis, et al., "Awakening to New Dangers in Iraq," 6; Ricks, *The Gamble*, 203–4.

funds utilized for payment of these militias, found "there was no comprehensive plan for SOI with specific goals, metrics or milestones from which to measure the individual or collective impact of the effort. Additionally, there was no requirement for commanders to document what SOI groups achieved or for any other organization to assess overall program impact in areas such as reductions in insurgent attacks."[181]   In short, the development of these organizations in locations outside of Anbar province was very ad hoc and informal.

This is not to imply there was no understanding or control applied over the development of these militias from higher-level U.S. headquarters at all. Multi-National Corp-Iraq (MNC-I), commanded by General Raymond Odierno, did issue specific guidance. U.S. forces were directed to ensure that at least SOI were locally screened, took pledges of loyalty, and were entered into biometric databases. The capabilities of SOI were deliberately restricted, and U.S. forces were ordered to not provide arms or ammunition to the SOI. Numbers of SOI being paid and biometrically tracked were supposed to be reported to higher headquarters.[182]   GEN Odierno's headquarters also issued unofficial guidance to commanders in the field. Odierno, while supportive of the concept of the SOI, recognized that many U.S. units were wary of the idea—some of the Iraqis joining these organizations had American blood on their hands, after all—and needed to be prodded forward, while other commanders and units might over-commit themselves to these organizations.[183]

What were the effects of these organizations on the insurgency against the United States and the Iraqi government? It is impossible to say, definitively. There is no doubt that, at least anecdotally, the SOI made great impressions on the U.S. forces as well as the Iraqi people; "Coalition commanders have repeatedly credited these forces for a large portion of the recent reduction in violence throughout Iraq."[184]   One commentator

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[181] Furbish, "Sons of Iraq Program," 1.

[182] Ibid., 3.

[183] Ricks, *The Gamble*, 205.

[184] Farook Ahmed, "Sons of Iraq and Awakening Forces," Backgrounder #23, Institute for the Study of War, February 21, 2008, 2.

indicates, "[t]he program complemented the operations of Coalition and Iraqi forces, allowing them to accomplish far more than they could otherwise have been able to on the security front."[185] General Petraeus himself, upbeat about Iraqi prospects, indicated in April 2008 that between the SOI and "relentless" actions by the U.S. military, the threat posed by insurgent organizations, especially AQI, was deeply degraded.[186] As the SIGAR report makes clear, however, there was no empirical evidence to prove the effectiveness of these militias, at least on a large scale.

H.   THE RESPONSE OF THE IRAQI STATE

The Iraqi government reacted to the Al Anbar Awakening, the SOI, and other militias with suspicion. The Iraqi government was not even informed of the United States' hand in building and financing the SOI until several months into its existence.[187] Though there was continual friction, the Iraqi military quickly cooperated with most of the organizations, seeing the same benefits to cooperation that U.S. units did—security, intelligence, the ability to reduce resources from such missions as force protection in order to shift them toward missions like hunting down and killing AQI leadership, and so on. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government, on the other hand, was less happy with overt cooperation with these militias. It was obvious that a careful position needed to be struck—violence was down, and most of these movements represented a newly empowered Sunni minority—so reaction from Maliki himself was muted. Maliki had aggressively supported the Anbar Sahwa,[188] where most people perceived the SOI were born, so he needed to tread carefully when it came to controlling these militia. The United Iraqi Alliance, Maliki's Shiite bloc, issued a statement, however, insisting "that the American administration stop this adventure."[189]

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[185] Michal Harari, "Uncertain Future for the Sons of Iraq," Backgrounder, Institute for the Study of War, August 3, 2010, 1.

[186] Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom*, 221.

[187] Ricks, *The Gamble*, 204. Ricks here quotes Emma Sky, one of GEN Petraeus' advisors.

[188] Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 252–3.

[189] Ricks, *The Gamble*, 206.

The members of these militias often failed to generate sympathy from the Iraqi government—at least partially because, in some cases, they refuse to acknowledge Baghdad's sovereignty. "One Fadhil [a neighborhood in Baghdad] CLC leader, Khalid Jamal al-Qaisi, has gone so far as to proclaim: "We are an independent state; no police or army is allowed to come in. The Americans asked to be our friends because we were the winners."[190] While most of the individuals associated with these militias did not endorse such incendiary sentiments, there was uncertainty with the government and within the population as to what these organizations truly mean to the local populations.

As can be expected, the posturing within the tribes and other elements of Sunni communities did not end with the development of these organizations—in fact, it seemed to increase. Patronage networks, facilitated by tribal leaders as well as local businessmen, assumed prominence again. In areas where the tribes were already a predominant social influence (Anbar province, for example), many tribal leaders felt so strengthened by the process that they took actions undermining the authority of local governments.[191] This prompted anger from Baghdad: "during a meeting in Al-Anbar with tribal leaders in October 2010, Prime Minister Al-Maliki chided the sheikhs to stop interfering in the security establishment's affairs and to stop obstructing operations."[192] While the Iraqi government had tended toward clientelism since 2003, after the establishment of local militias, "with the blurring of the divisions between government, political party, tribe and private business, the form of [state] authority has been much closer to a condition of neo-patrimonialism."[193]

Nevertheless, the state recognized the positive influence of these militias in terms of reducing the volume of violence, and agreed to incorporate them into the official governmental apparatus. Beginning in October 2008, the management and control of SOI

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[190] Sam Dagher, "Market Bombings: Baghdad Locals Want Security, Not Iraqi Police," *Christian Science Monitor,* February 4, 2008, quoted in Katulis, et al., "Awakening to New Dangers in Iraq," 6.

[191] Cigar, Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government, 65–69.

[192] Ibid., 68.

[193] Glen Rangwala, "The Democratic Transition in Iraq and the Discovery of Its Limitations," in *The Iraq War and Democratic Politics*, ed. Alex Danchev and John Macmillan (New York: Routledge, 2005), 176.

and associated militias was transferred from U.S. oversight to the Government of Iraq (GoI). This process included full registration and inventory processes, conducted jointly between GoI and Multi National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), resulting in over 95,000 individuals verified as eligible for transfer. The second step, however, proved difficult; the GoI mandated that individuals not transferred to the Iraqi military or police (20 percent of the total, according to the GoI) would be offered jobs in other ministries (the remaining 80 percent).[194] Determining who could go where, to do what, was problematic.

The GoI lacked the prerequisite administrative architecture to properly process or find jobs for the vast majority of these individuals. The GoI further lacked logistical infrastructure to pay or supply them. As the GoI has been aggressive about ensuring its security candidates are literate, many individuals were rejected for that deficiency alone (prompting many U.S. units to organize and oversee literacy programs). Literacy highlights a critical problem: in the government bureaucracy, there inevitably are limited positions available for young, uneducated, and inexperienced men.[195]

From the early days of the emergence of the SOI, Iraqi officials repeatedly expressed concern about the quality of the personnel involved in the program, as well as recidivism and allegiances. That is, many Iraqis (especially Shias working within the GoI bureaucracy) perceived these militias as simply "amnestied insurgents," collections of terrorists, mobsters, and strongmen who did not have the best interests of the Iraqi state at heart. This was valid criticism. Additionally, the Iraqi government pointed out that in many cases, lists of data (including biometric enrollments) were corrupted or simply erroneous, and in some cases, up to half the names submitted as belonging to local militias were fake, repeated, or otherwise false.[196]

Predictably, the GoI has slowly dealt with these militias, causing frustration among the militias as well as the Sunni population as a whole. The militias have

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[194] Furbish, "Sons of Iraq Program," 15.

[195] Harrari, "Uncertain Future," 2.

[196] Ibid., 71.

repeatedly struggled with issues like late pay, lack of public support from the Iraqi government, and harassment by Iraqi security forces; some forces have threatened to walk off the job and rejoin insurgent organizations (who, for their part, have reputedly offered sums of money to the fighters they know most need it—when they are not deliberately targeting them with attacks).[197] This prompted allegations of, at best, GoI incompetence, and at worst, GoI maneuvers to deliberately relegate the Sunni community to the status of irrelevant bystanders.

Nonetheless, the integration of SOI into the central government has occurred, albeit slowly. As of June 2012, over 70,000 have been integrated into the government and another 30,000 continue to man SOI checkpoints (those manning checkpoints are paid about $300 a month by Baghdad).[198] Many of those integrated and now working for the ministries have expressed frustration with their roles, feeling they are menial. Some have been arrested and charged with crimes by the Iraqi state.[199] In the ongoing violence wracking the state of Iraq, the SOI continue to see significant attacks directed against them.[200]

By 2009, the elites associated with the formation of the SOI formed blocks in influential political parties, some of which have achieved significant political success. The Sunni population has widely viewed the lack of support for the elections in 2005 to be a strategic failure. Unsurprisingly, these parties and factions are the strongest in Anbar province, but also they see compelling electoral performances in many Sunni-dominated areas of Iraq, including Diyala province.[201] The SOI program has brought Sunni elites back into the formal political process.

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[197] Cigar, *Al Qaeda, the Tribes, and the Government*, 70–72.

[198] Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights," Congressional Research Service, August 21, 2012, 18.

[199] Austin Long, Stephanie Pezard, Bryce Loidolt, and Todd C. Helmus, *Locals Rule: Historical Lessons for Creating Local Defense for Afghanistan and Beyond* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2012), 159.

[200] Dan Morse, "Former Sons of Iraq Targeted By Insurgents After American Pullout," *The Washington Post*, January 27, 2012; Jamal Hashim and Mustafa Sabah, "Scores of Deadly Attacks Across Iraq Kill Dozens," *Xinhua*, July 24, 2012.

[201] Katzman, "Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights," 7.

I.   CONCLUSION

As of September 2012, the SOI remain in a somewhat nebulous position. Some are still on the streets, ostensibly securing their neighborhoods. Many have reportedly been incorporated into the government. The government continues to deal with tribal entities as a sort of extra-governmental entity upon which it relies upon for local justice and intelligence, as well as other functions.[202]

When one examines the history of Iraq since the 1980s, it is clear the state has developed in coordination with the influence of local strong men as much as it has through traditional state-oriented power structures and central development. This is largely because the Iraqi state has not dominated control of coercive, legitimate force, in either the Saddam era or the post-Saddam era. Instead, those in power have delegated force to lower levels (in the case of Saddam) or they have empowered strategies which have the same effect (in terms of the SOI).

In the case of the Sahwa, the U.S. "peace-makers" supported the Sahwa because they believed the tribal militias in Anbar province were exceptionally effective at reducing violence. The United States believed the Sahwa had the side-effect of bridging the gap between the central government and local government. This is because, with the help of U.S. units in Anbar, the tribal elites usurped the functions of local government, established local councils of tribal elites, replaced the Ramadi mayor, filled the police with tribesman selected by tribal leaders, and altered the central government's policy regarding the destination of army recruits. By supporting this option the United States empowered a union of traditional strongmen.[203]   From a U.S. perspective, this was the best of several bad options.[204]   Nonetheless, this agreement gave the strongmen exactly what they wanted with little significant compromise. The agreement between the U.S. forces and Iraqi strong men resulted in compromised peace-building.

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[202] Tim Arango, "Iraq's Tribal Chiefs Step into the Breach with Swift Justice," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2012.

[203] Ricks, *The Gamble*, 206; Simon, "The Price of the Surge," 61–62.

[204] Carter Malkasian argues this most cogently. See Malkasian, "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand."

The Iraqi government was originally dissatisfied with the prospect of armed Sunni tribesmen, but they were convinced to fund them and incorporate them into the central government at the behest of the U.S. government. The fact that the Iraqi government was weaker than the U.S. government, and dependent on U.S. support, was a determinative factor in their assuming responsibility for the SOI despite their misgivings. In this way, the United States imposed compromised peace-building upon the Iraqi government.

The policies of Saddam-era government have therefore been repeated. Baghdad does not hold a monopoly on coercive power. Patronage politics have been reinforced, at least at the regional level. The tribes have re-exerted their role as spoilers on the Iraqi state, a role they've inadvertently played since the 1980s. A sectarian divide has lingered and even been enforced through the development of provincially-determined manning requirements in military units. These policies were not unforeseen; after all, they were empowered during Saddam's rule. They are arguably artifacts of Iraqi "political sociology."[205]

Nonetheless, compromised peace-building has resulted in a greater inclusion at the national political structure for the Sunni community than at any other point since the U.S. invasion. Not only have SOI-linked parties gained representative power in Baghdad, most of those who worked with the SOI have been incorporated into the central government. With this inclusion has come more participation from the Sunni population in national politics. This has resulted in a more representative government. It is a government still beset with problems, including the ongoing insurgency, but a government with more promise than existed in 2006.

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[205] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, 170.

III. CASE STUDY: AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE (ALP)

A. INTRODUCTION

"[The Afghan Local Police] is, in essence, a community watch with AK-47s, under the local District Chief of Police, with members nominated by a representative Shura Council, vetted by the Afghan intel service, and trained by and partnered with Afghan Police and U.S. Special Forces elements," explained General David Petraeus to the Senate in 2011.[206] This chapter presents the case-study of the ALP in order to analyze the effect of local militias on the state. Utilizing the model of Barnett and Zurcher's peace-builder's contract, this chapter seeks to determine the effect of the ALP not just on the security environment but on the powers of the government. The interaction between the U.S. government, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), and local strong men is complex and nuanced in Afghanistan, exacerbated by public perceptions of legitimacy and disparate views of the role of government.

The ALP must be analyzed in terms of Village Stability Operations (VSO), a doctrine in place in Afghanistan to empower local governance. ALP is intended to provide security to villages which are participating in VSO operations. The ALP must also be analyzed in coordination with the history of the local security programs that came before it in Afghanistan. The cultural phenomenon of the arbakai will be examined, as both Westerners and Afghans often evoke the Pashtun concept of arbakai when it comes to discussions of locally-oriented armed groups.

This paper will seek to describe the history and emergence of the ALP, including strategies of employment in some key locations. It must also be noted that this strategy of using local community-based militias to bolster security has already been pursued, in fits and starts, since 2001; with some discussion of the lessons of these programs included herein. The ALP program will be discussed in as much detail as possible here, but it is important to remember that not only is it a very locally-oriented program (that is, it is

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[206] "Statement of General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army Commander, International Security Assistance Forces, NATO, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 March 2011," released by U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee.

faced with different challenges and is built with different expectations in every location), but since it is relatively new (started officially in summer of 2010[207]), it has not yet been fully evaluated by responsible officials, and the literature on it is still somewhat sparse.

B.   THE AFGHAN STATE

Afghanistan today is essentially a neopatrimonial absolutist state. Atul Kohli argues many developing states in the third world have "weakly centralized and barely legitimate authority structures, personalistic leaders unconstrained by norms or institutions, and bureaucracies of poor quality. These states are labeled here as neopatrimonial because, despite the façade of a modern state, public officeholders tend to treat public resources as their personal patrimony."[208]   Such states, like Afghanistan, do little to draw the attention of their people to their state in a positive manner.

Patronage networks are dominant in Afghanistan, functioning from the level of President Karzai down. This is largely a problem related to the construction of the formal state as it exists in Afghanistan (both currently and in a historical sense): provincial and district councils report directly up the chain of leadership to Karzai, have little impetus to respond to the desires of local citizens (since their connection to local citizens is irrelevant to their appointment to or responsibility to their post, which comes from Karzai), and lack control over local budgets or long-term strategies. Even mayors are appointed by Karzai.[209]   Karzai came to power with U.S. influence, but could only maintain it by recruiting and empowering existing strongmen; Karzai further extended his

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[207] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 4. It must be noted that this report has generated controversy within military and non-military personnel in Afghanistan. In response, a legal investigation (15–6) was ordered to be conducted by General John R. Allen, ISAF commander, and assigned to BG James R. Marrs. A redacted version of the "Findings and Recommendations" portion of the investigation (basically, the executive summary) was published in an unclassified version in 2011. See James R. Marrs, "Findings and Recommendations (AR 15–6 Investigation—Credibility Assessment of Allegations of Human Rights Violations Appearing in a Human Rights Watch Report)," December 6, 2011.

[208] Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

[209] Michael Shurkin, *Subnational Government in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2011), 5–9.

reach through legal and extralegal means.[210] There is no functional bureaucracy; instead a series of individuals who owe their position in the government solely to their relationship to Karzai, rather than having any particular merit or having been selected by a community.[211] Karzai relied on traditional leaders, warlords, and tribal institutions only somewhat in 2002, but as time passed, the incorporation of these individuals into the state has increased through what at least one critic has argued are progressive stages.[212] These warlords and militia commanders have degraded institutional development; institutions barely exist and what institutions do exist, do not reach into the villages of the rural areas.[213] The construct of the central state actually requires strong men, warlords, and other power-brokers to join it or otherwise administer governance in local areas because, since they lack formal power granted by Kabul, they must possess significant informal power in order to accomplish governance functions.[214]

Ethnic differences are a particular, deeply complicating issue in the Afghan state. As Thomas Johnson shows in his analysis of the 2004 and 2010 elections, Afghans tend to perceive themselves and, more importantly, choose leaders, based on predominantly ethnic considerations.[215] This strongly implies Afghans tend to think about their interests as well as their future in fragmented, primarily ethnic terms that align poorly, or not at all, to the interests of the centralized state. In some sense, this is the way Afghanistan has "always been" but this perspective has been deepened by the failures of previous regimes

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[210] Steve Hess, "Coming to Terms with Neopatrimonialism: Soviet and American Nation-Building Projects in Afghanistan," *Central Asian Survey* 29:2, 15 July 10, 181–183; Robert Reilly, "Shaping Strategic Communcation," in Hy Rothstein and John Arquilla, *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 176–7.

[211] Antonio Guistozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 19.

[212] Roger MacGinty, "Warlords and the Liberal Peace: State-Building in Afghanistan," *Conflict, Security, and Development* 10:4 (August 19, 2010), 588–90.

[213] Antonio Guistozzi, "Afghanistan: The Patrimonial Trap and the Dream of Institution-Building," in Denisa Kostovicova and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, ed., *Persistent State Weakness in the Global Age* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 76.

[214] Shurkin, *Subnational Government in Afghanistan*, 7–13.

[215] Thomas H. Johnson, "The Illusion of Afghan Electoral Representative Democracy: The Cases of the 2009 Presidential and 2010 National Parliamentary Elections," unpublished manuscript, Naval Postgraduate School, February 8, 2012; Thomas H. Johnson, "Democratic Nation-Building in the Arc of Crisis: The Case of the Presidential Election in Afghanistan," in *Critical Issues Facing the Middle East: Security, Politics and Economics,* ed. James A. Russell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

and further strengthened by the distance engendered by years of recent conflict.[216] Despite the weight of history being against the Karzai government, the Karzai regime has failed repeatedly to overcome historical prejudice against the government or to provide an effective alternative in the minds of the Afghans. As the elections debacle in 2011 indicates, "[t]he increasing Pashtun tilt in key appointments reflects a four-year long trend in which Karzai has sought to shore up his traditional ethnic base with the perks of patronage even as much of the Pashtun belt sinks deeper into revolt against the Karzai government."[217]

Joel Migdal points out that compliance (the state's authority rests on gaining agreement to its demands by the population), participation (systematizing the population in state-organized institutions), and legitimation (or accepting the state's rules as correct) are the true indicators of the control a state has over its population. He argues that legitimation is the most critical of the three indicators—both compliance and participation often occur in any state through a rational evaluation of risks and rewards— but legitimation is the most important and far-reaching indicator not just of a state's measures of control, but of the very *idea* of the particular state in the population's mind.[218]

Legitimization is the most important measurement of social control, and the Afghan government exerts little legitimacy. The idea of state legitimacy was deeply important to Afghans in 2002–2004, but less so to the Westerners who were largely steering the formation of the government, and therefore generally ignored while they pushed, instead, an agenda of democracy.[219] The West compounded the legitimacy issue by failing to follow up a stated commitment to the development and reconstruction of the government with significant financing or coherent, long-term, international strategies (at

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[216] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 318–320, 303.

[217] International Crisis Group, *Afghanistan's Election Stalemate*, 23 February 2011.

[218] Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 32–3.

[219] S. Frederick Starr, "Sovereignty and Legitimacy in Afghan Nation-Building," in Francis Fukuyama, ed., *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 108–9.

least until 2008), though to this day economic strategies have remained flawed.[220] Karzai's government, which has little extractive capability and little predictive income besides aid (which, as mentioned, was a pittance compared to what was required), chose to focus instead on the development of patron-client relations.[221] That these relationships have involved the empowerment of strong men, criminals, warlords, and drug-dealers has not gone unnoticed among the population, and the Taliban have used this behavior as a significant aspect of their propaganda efforts.[222]

The population, for the most part, has seen little reason to treat the government with any significant measure of legitimacy, since it essentially exerts no legitimacy. Arguably, "[t]he most important institutions are those necessary for providing citizens with security and justice: the police force and the judicial system. Yet these two are recognized as the most corrupt and the least effective by the Afghan people."[223] Since 2001 Karzai himself has increasingly lost respect from both the Afghan people and the international community.[224] This has led to an environment which is conducive to the return not just of Taliban resistance to the field, but of a popular perception among the population (especially the disenfranchised Pashtuns) that the Taliban, at least, are responsive, predictable, and honest. It seems likely that corruption drives as many people to join the anti-Karzai insurgency as any other factor.[225]

C.   TRADITIONAL LOCAL MILITIAS IN AFGHANISTAN

Clearly, there are a variety of reasons why the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) have continually struggled with developing adequate security for GIRoA.

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[220] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2012), 316–333; Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 318–320, 333–336.

[221] Thomas Barfield, "Afghanistan's Ethnic Puzzle: Decentralizing Power Before the U.S. Withdrawal," *Foreign Affairs* 90:5 (Sept/Oct 2011), 60–62; Robert M. Cassidy, *War, Will, and Warlords: Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001–2011* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2012), 34, 115.

[222] International Crisis Group, *Taliban Propaganda: Winning the War of Words?* (24 July 2008).

[223] International Center for Transitional Justice, *Stabilizing Afghanistan: Legitimacy and Accountability in Governance*, January 2010, 1.

[224] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 318–320, 307–311.

[225] Stephen Carter and Kate Clark, *No Shortcut to Stability: Justice, Politics, and Insurgency in Afghanistan*, (London: Chatham House, 2010), 12.

Foremost is that the central government is weak, with little extractive capacity[226] and poor legitimacy within the population,[227] and that President Karzai is perceived as passive, corrupt, and too willing to compromise and too unwilling to reign in abuses.[228] Further, there has been little consistent or comprehensive ISAF or GIRoA engagement in the rural areas, where the majority of most Afghans live. As Thomas Johnson argued, "[t]he U.S. engagement in Afghanistan is foundering because of the endemic failure to engage and protect rural villages, and to immunize them against insurgency." [229] This is partly because ISAF itself has pursued a variety of strategies with little consistency since 2001,[230] other than a consistently expressed goal of attacking and destroying Al-Qaeda. Funding for aid and economic and development strategies have typically been lacking. At several points, the empowerment of warlords has been part of the U.S. security strategy. [231] The fundamental issue regarding security, of course, is that the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) are not nearly as effective as one would hope they would be after more than a decade's worth of training and spending. It must be highlighted that ISAF has continually attempted to improve the quality of the ANP, including a recent program intended to inculcate ANP across the country with "community policing" skills to attempt to bring the ANP into a partnership with the Afghan people.[232] Nonetheless, significant issues within the Afghan police remain, as they are routinely involved in offenses ranging from theft, fraud, and blackmail to torture, murder, and collusion with insurgent forces. Some ANP units have defected en masse to

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[226] Adam Roberts notes only 8 percent of the Afghan government's revenue is generated by taxes. See Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival* 51 (23 December 2010), 42.

[227] Afghanistan Rights Monitor, *A Question of Legitimacy: Afghans' Perceptions About Legitimacy in Karzai's Government*, 2009. 54 percent of respondents considered Karzai's government to have no democratic legitimacy.

[228] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 272–3, 303.

[229] Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "All Counterinsurgency is Local," *The Atlantic*, October 2008, 16.

[230] Bing West, *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way Out of Afghanistan* (New York: Random House, 2011), xx.

[231] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 222.

[232] Michael Murray, "Counterinsurgency and Community Policing in Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, January 1, 2012.

the side of the Taliban.[233] The turnover rate for the ANA is so high that a third of its force consists of raw, inexperienced recruits, and it must put significant effort into replacing a third of its force every year.[234] It is obvious that pervasive issues in the ANA and ANP, complicated by a future decline in security spending, will be impossible to change with any sense of rapidity.

One stratagem designed to overcome the inherent weakness of Afghan security forces involves the development of local defense forces (the ALP) and their partnership with small contingents of U.S. forces (generally U.S. Special Forces), in order to provide security and assist in re-invigorating governance at the local level throughout Afghanistan. As Roger MacGinty argues, "[t]his contradicted the liberal state-building logic that emphasized meritocracy, but it satisfied a pragmatic security logic."[235] This tactic derives from the implicit recognition that the vast majority of Afghans live in rural areas[236] and the politics of these rural areas, the woleswali, which are also locations in the district that are home to a single tribe or clan, are more important than the politics of the province.[237]

Because tribes are often at war, long ago the tribes developed systems of defending themselves. Afghan local defense forces have as their traditional precedent the idea of arbakai, which is a traditional Pashtun security force drawn from a tribal community in times of stress to provide for security.[238] Since Afghanistan has struggled with poor infrastructure, years of war, a lack of an inclusive government (since

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[233] See Mirwais Harooni, "Billions Spent on Afghan Police but Brutality, Corruption Prevail," *Reuters*, August 24, 2011; Maria Abi-Habib, "Police Undermine Fight Against Taliban," *Wall Street Journal*, January 11, 2012; Akbar Shinwari and Amna Nawaz, "Afghan Police Commander Leads Defection to Taliban," *NBC News*, July 24, 2012.

[234] Rod Nordlund, "Afghan Army's Turnover Threatens U.S. Strategy," *New York Times*, October 15, 2012. It is worth noting that some experts highlighted this as a problem as early as 2005, and it was cogently argued again in 2011 by Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew DuPee. See Johnson and DuPee, "Transition to Nowhere: The Limits of 'Afghanization,'" *Foreign Policy*, March 22, 2011.

[235] MacGinty, "Warlords and the Liberal Peace," 590.

[236] Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 298.

[237] Johnson and Mason, "All Counterinsurgency is Local," 16.

[238] Human Rights Watch, while interviewing Afghan security and government personnel about the ALP, indicates that many Afghans refer to the ALP as arbakai and the arbakai as ALP, interchangeably, sometimes in the same sentence. See Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 20.

essentially the late 1970s), and traditionally weak and disconnected means of rule within the confines of Afghanistan, many Afghans, and Pashtuns in particular, do not perceive GIRoA or any central government as having much legitimate influence, even over criminal matters.[239] Partially because state structures in Afghanistan throughout the past hundreds of years have always struggled to extend their reach into these tribal areas, the implementation of security in these areas has remained quite literally in the hands of traditional leaders.[240]

As such, the politics of the woleswali are linked to traditional tribal modes of governance. Since resources are finite in Afghanistan (including arable land and fresh water) and the tribes are often in conflict with each other, they have derived norms of behavior as well as complex systems of negotiation in order to mediate some of these conflicts.[241] Tribal leaders, known as khans, work with designated intermediaries from the tribe to the government, known as maliks. Largely egalitarian councils composed of the men in the tribe, known as jirgas, are where true decision-making power within the tribe resides.[242] Jirgas function because a basic tenet of Pashtun culture is that each man has equal power and rights as a Pashtun, and that the peace that exists between Pashtun communities is more important in the long run than the individual rights and power of a single man. The system is therefore inherently cooperative. Furthermore, it "emphasize[s] restorative justice based on local conceptions of fairness" rather than Western-style retributive justice. [243] After the 30 years of conflict, these traditional means of decision-making have been frayed, but this is generally typical of how most tribal Afghans think

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[239] Thomas Barfield, "Culture and Custom in Nation-Building: Law in Afghanistan," *Maine Law Review* 60:2 (2008), 348.

[240] Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*, 1–2.

[241] Robert Johnson*, The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 16–22.

[242] Thomas Ruttig, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency: The Haqqani Network as an Autonomous Entity," in Antonio Giustozzi, ed., *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 57–8.

[243] Susanne Schmeidl & Masood Karokhail, "The Role of Non-State Actors in 'Community-Based Policing'—An Exploration of the Arbakai (Tribal Police) in South-Eastern Afghanistan," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30:2 (12 August 2009), 321.

of traditional governance.[244] This includes the Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan's south and east, the portions of the country where the violence is most prevalent, and from which the Taliban draw the majority of their support.

In these areas, especially in eastern Afghanistan, the cultural idea of an intelligence service exists, called the kishakee (which literally means "detection" or "detector"), which gives information to tribal leadership about the enemies of the tribal region. In response to data gathered by the kishakee (or from information commonly known), the chegha (or "call") goes out from the tribal leadership to gather a defense of the people. The tribal leadership then, through the organizational auspices of a shura, organizes the fighters into arbakai,[245] and possibly, into a lashkar. The arbakai (or "guardian," but understood by most Pashtuns in a broader context of providing local policing) is typically used for securing local villages and sometimes for providing border defense, while the lashkar (translated as something like "large gathering of people") serves as a show of strength or quite often as an expeditionary military force.[246] Lashkars were raised in the time of the great 19th century Afghan ruler Abdur Rahman, for instance, and sent to serve in his armies as individual units.[247] There is a clear difference between lashkar and arbakai in the minds of Pashtuns—arbakai are quite defensive and local in nature, while only the lashkar are used in a broader and more legitimately offensive manner.

It must be stressed that arbakai have grass-roots support from the community. In addition, they are unpaid, and often unarmed, relying on honor and the implicit understanding of the shura's expectations. They are not hired or contracted by anyone, including the central government. The responsibilities of arbakais change from location

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[244] Nazif M. Sharani, "War, Factionalism, and the State in Afghanistan," *American Anthropologist* 104:3 (September 2002), 717.

[245] Some critics argue the arbakai are not truly a traditional mode of tribal protection and only emerged in around the turn of the 19th century during the reign of Habibullah Khan. See Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), *From Arbaki to Local Police: Today's Challenges and Tomorrow's Concern,* Spring 2012, 10.

[246] Schmeidl & Karokhail, "The Role of Non-State Actors in 'Community-Based Policing,'" 320; Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*, 2.

[247] Seth Jones, "Community Defense in Afghanistan," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 57 (2010).11.

to location and from tribe to tribe, but they generally exist to do three things: implement law and order, defend boundaries and borders, and implement the decisions of shuras and jirgas. Arbakai are called up on a circumstantial basis and are not conceived as a permanent organization.[248]

Serving in an arbakai (for free) grants honor, while serving for pay (in the sense of a militia member) is shameful, according to some individuals in southeast Afghanistan.[249] It is not a financial burden for a member of the tribe to serve in an arbakai since the shura which they answer to also levies materiel requirements on the members of the community to support the arbakai. Membership in the arbakai is very merit-based and a member of the arbakai must be "a good Pashtun"—honest, disciplined, and not afraid to protect the weak. The leader of an arbakai, called an ameer (from the Arabic word for "commander"), is selected on the basis of his respect for the shura and jirgas, his understanding of and adherence to pashtunwali and the tribal justice system, and leadership skills (interestingly enough, some ameers have reportedly been women). While the leadership of the arbakai is basically static, the membership in the arbakai is essentially part-time and rotates; that is, there is no standing arbakai of individuals who do nothing else with their life other than act as an arbakai. A Pashtun is part of the arbakai for a specified period of time and at the end of that time will go back to tending his farm or whatever he did before arbakai duty, and someone else will take his place. All families in the community participate in the arbakai by the utilization of, essentially, a "duty roster."[250]

Arbakais are not just a tool of the past; they have been called up and utilized in recent years. In 2008, arbakais under the control of the Mangal tribe in Loya Paktia implemented controls against insurgency and the drug-trade. In a notable case in Loya Paktia, a bomb-maker accidentally killed himself while constructing an IED; faced with

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[248] Schmeidl & Karokhail, "The Role of Non-State Actors in 'Community-Based Policing,'" 322; Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*, 3–5.

[249] This is according to Tariq. Susanne Schmeidl and Massod Karokhail have nothing to say about the relative honor accorded to those who serve freely or who are paid, but they note the Afghan government has paid arbakai since 2004, mostly in conjunction with the provision of election-related security. See Schmeidl & Karokhail, "The Role of Non-State Actors in 'Community-Based Policing,'" 324.

[250] Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*, 3–5.

that evidence, the arbakai burned down his house and kicked his family out of their home village.[251] They were thus shunned from the community.

An examination of the facts reveals certain strengths and weaknesses within the concept of the arbakai when one considers the threat posed in 21st century Afghanistan. The arbakai maintain a deep connection to and support from the community, and their authority and responsibility goes both down into the village and up as far as the arbakai. Membership in the arbakai is based on largely ethical and cultural considerations; status, wealth, and background (including military or police training or experience) have nothing to do with it. The arbakai have limited duties and answer directly to the people through the shura, as everyone (who is a responsible, upstanding Pashtun) has the potential to serve in the arbakai at some point. They are uniquely suited to conduct enforcement of dispute resolution and local justice issues, especially in ways that resonate with a somewhat isolated, traditional population with customary, bucolic issues. The arbakai have no responsibility to the surrounding area, the district, or the province; there is no natural connection to GIRoA. They have no formal training in police or military skills, nor are they properly equipped for such roles—meaning they have tremendous difficulty combating a modern, violent, well-funded insurgency and adhering to modern standards of evidence and intelligence collection. Their justice is based on tribal precedents, Pashtunwali, and sharia law, all of which are effective for a local population which understands, respects, and prefers this law, but which quite often are not consistent with international standards of law, or even Afghan national law. The arbakai has little relevance outside Pashtun regions, and even inside Pashtun areas, it has less history in the south than it does the east. Perhaps most problematically, they are dependent upon and linked to the tribal structure in a village, which must be functional and effective. This is simply not the case in some locations, having been degraded after 30 years of civil war and social fragmentation. As Barnett Rubin points out, many traditional networks fragmented during the 1980s and 1990s as it became obvious that those who could relate to external state and non-state powers, and dominate access to their resources, would

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251 Ibid., 12.

control power within Afghanistan—therefore broadening the influence of Islamists and warlords at the expense of traditional khans and ameers.[252]

D.   GOVERNMENT MILITIAS SINCE 2001

Partially because of the cultural precept of the arbakai, partially because of somewhat related examples elsewhere in history (including the Sons of Iraq), and simply because this is a compelling idea to pursue in a place faced with a lack of security, ISAF and organizations associated with ISAF have been determined to build and implement a functional system for local community policy since 2001. Since 2001, at least 50 of these programs had been implemented by early 2011 alone.[253]   GIRoA and local Afghan rhetorical and materiel support for these programs has varied widely.

The Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) was one of these programs. It was created in 2005 over the objections of many international law enforcement professionals, who assessed it was doomed to failure. The ANAP took approximately 11,000 young men, put them through 10 days of training, gave them a uniform and an AK47, paid them a modest stipend, and posted them in locations where security was particularly poor. Predictably, they struggled intensely with discipline, including issues related to literacy and drug addiction. Many recruits were selected through nepotism and the loyalty of most recruits was questionable.[254]   They experienced enormous problems with planning, logistics, resources, understanding their own capabilities and limitations, and execution of missions. Many ANAP were predatory and it was commonly known among ISAF and GIRoA that many were illegally "taxing" the population and muscling in on trade. In some locations, ANAP squads engaged in firefights with other ANAP squads over "turf," and in some locations they were co-opted by the insurgency or drug networks. U.S. General Robert Cone admitted, "What we saw was that the effect of paying people to

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[252] Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*. 2nd edit., (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 226.

[253] Christian Dennys, *Watching While the Frog Boils: Strategic Folly in the Afghan Security Sector*, The Centre for International Governance Innovation, Afghanistan Paper #9 (October 2011), 14.

[254] Hy Rothstein, "America's Longest War," in Hy Rothstein and John Arqilla, ed., *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 73.

support us when we needed them, despite the positive impact over time, also had the effect of arming people who were not necessarily in line with the government."[255]   By 2008, many of them were incorporated into real ANP training programs, while "[o]thers, considered unsuitable or unable to find positions in the new tashkeel,[256] were simply let go, with no apparent efforts to disarm them." [257] In 2008, the program was officially shut down.

The Community Defense Forces (CDF) was created in 2009 to provide security for the upcoming national elections. They numbered about 10,000 individuals, and were intended to be postured in locations where security lacked. Mohammad Arif Noorzai was appointed to run it; he was viewed "as a Karzai ally and a member of a powerful family that is notorious for its involvement in the narcotics trade."[258]   One of his subordinates bragged about securing over 30,000 votes for Karzai.[259]   It was funded only months before the elections, poorly organized, and even more poorly executed.

The Afghan Public Protection Program, or AP3, was designed, organized, and put into place by the U.S. military in 2009, although the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) soon bought in. It was designed to provide for local security, specifically along the lines of protecting local infrastructure, and was a response to Taliban activity in Wardak province.[260]   It was contentious from the beginning; the Wardak governor claims tribal leaders came to him and demanded an effective program they could have some hand in, while the local population complained in a public hearing on AP3 that they had never asked for it, and it was a poor substitute for increased ANP and ANA presence, which they really wanted. A shura process was supposed to be in place to ensure recruits were

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[255] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 20.

[256] Tashkeel is the Afghan term roughly related to the U.S. "table of allowances," or what an Afghan military organization is authorized and required to adequately maintain in order to accomplish its missions.

[257] Royal United Services Institute, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, November 2009,102.

[258] Reid and Muhammedally*, Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 21.

[259] Ibid., 22.

[260] Lefèvre, *Local Defense Initiative in Afghanistan*, 8.

vetted through local leaders.[261] The program was desired to be a district-level program, wherein the individuals in each district would answer to the district ANP chief.[262]

The program fell apart when Gulam Mohammed joined the AP3 as the provincial commander. Gulam, a former jihadi who led a group of 3,000 men first for Hizb-e-Islami in the 1990s and then for the Taliban, and who had spent two years in ISAF detention from 2004 to 2006, was apparently recruited by SOF to serve in this position, and supported by the provincial governor, who made him report directly to him and therefore avoid interaction with ANP or shura leadership. (Gulam would claim in public forums that he worked for SOF and he and his men did not answer to GIRoA at all). More problematically, Gulam brought along 500 Pashtun fighters, almost all of whom were reportedly former Taliban, who were sped through the investigation process without proper vetting. Local Afghans felt Gulam, his men, and the AP3 program were tainted. Allegations of anti-Pashtun abusive behavior and overt nepotism were common.[263] In 2010, the AP3 in Wardak was converted to ALP.

The true precursor to the ALP, however, is the Community Defense Initiative (CDI).[264] Largely established by U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) through SOF's VSO, CDI was established in locations where there was little or no ANSF, where SOF could partner with them, and where the local population asked for them to exist. For VSO to function optimally in terms of bringing security to a local populace, the population must *choose* to develop and support a local security force.[265]

The Afghan government was originally resistant to the idea of the CDI, seeing them not only as an arbitrary creation of SOF likely to be hoisted upon GIRoA (to draw,

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261 Rothstein, "America's Longest War," 73.

262 Joe Quinn and Mario A. Fumerton, *Counterinsurgency from Below: The Afghan Local Police in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, November 2010, 17.

263 Lefèvre, *Local Defense Initiative in Afghanistan*, 10–11.

264 By 2009, there were a variety of programs operating throughout Afghanistan under a variety of names. In effect, most of them were the CDI program; however, LDI (Local Defense Initiative), CDF, CDI, and LDF were all acronyms assigned to these organizations. Sometimes they were assigned multiple acronyms in the same sentence, according to HRW. See Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 22.

265 LTC Basicl Catanzaro and MAJ Kirk Windmueller, "Taking a Stand: Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police," *Special Warfare*, July/September 2011.

therefore, more GIRoA funding and more man-power, thus generating more management problems), but also because none of the previous examples of local defense organizations had performed very well. Nonetheless, by late 2009, GIRoA has accepted responsibility for the CDI, most of which have since been incorporated into the ALP.

Since 2001, most of these militias struggled to attain any sort of success in local security. They were mostly top-down initiatives (proposed by higher-ranking U.S. military headquarters and personnel), and sometimes even lacked cooperation and funding from other U.S. agencies. The Afghan government also routinely lacked genuine support for these programs.[266]

E. THE ALP EMERGES

U.S. forces examined the history of militia forces in Afghanistan in 2009. They researched the failings of previous programs, and they researched the culture of traditional village protection systems in Afghan history, including the arbakai. Some of the precepts of the CDI program were adopted, and incorporated with the doctrine of VSO. This revamped militia program was called the ALP, and briefed to GIRoA.[267]

On 16 August 2010, the ALP was established by President Hamid Karzai. The ALP is officially supposed to report to the Ministry of the Interior via District ANP chiefs and local jirgas ostensibly decide on the manning of the organization. The ALP is intended to consolidate all known village defense programs across the nation. Although U.S. pays for it (in 2011 Congress has secured funding for up to 30,000 ALPs),[268] this funding is funneled through the MOI and the program is generally acknowledged to be an Afghan program.[269] As with all military plans in Afghanistan, implementation varies widely from location to location, with fascinating results.

The ALP starts with an understanding consistent with traditional Afghan society, where power rests not in a person or a place, but "in an elusive network, which needs

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[266] Rothstein, "America's Longest War," 73.

[267] Jones, *The Strategic Logic of Militia*, 29–32.

[268] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 4.

[269] Sean Naylor, "Program has Afghans as First Line of Defense," *Army Times*, July 20, 2010.

constant maintenance and reconstruction."[270]   This is conceptually similar to the woleswali. Since 2001, as Thomas Johnson notes, "the woleswali are last, not first, in U.S. military and political strategy."[271]   In contrast, Johnson's "expanded inkblot strategy," which has already been adopted in modified form in several locations throughout Afghanistan, looks something like the ALP program. Johnson advocated that 200 villages, nation-wide, were chosen, based on importance to the local districts and assumedly the importance to Afghan success, then supported with approximately 100 ISAF security personnel and 30–40 ANA. The point, Johnson indicates, is that, "[t]he troops would provide a steady security presence, strengthen the position of tribal elders, and bolster the district police." A key difference between Johnson's program and the ALP is that Johnson's program would incorporate ANA (which is what many local leaders say they want), rather than locally recruited individuals to serve in a new organization.[272]

Consistent with these ideas but advocated concurrently, U.S. SOF in 2009 began advocating the usage of VSO.

> VSO are specifically oriented toward insurgent-controlled or -contested rural areas where there exist limited or no military or police elements of the Afghan National Security Forces, or ANSF. VSO enable local security and re-establish or re-empower traditional local governance mechanisms that represent the populations, such as shuras and jirgas (decision-making councils), and that promote critical local development to improve the quality of life within village communities and districts. In theory and practice, SOF efforts at the village level expand to connect village clusters upward to local district centers, while national-level governance efforts connect downward to provincial centers and then to district-level centers.[273]

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[270] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1990), 22.

[271] Johnson and Mason, "All Counterinsurgency is Local," 2.

[272] Ibid., 2. Johnson expands his argument in Thomas H. Johnson, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat," *Operationalizing a Comprehensive Approach in Semi-Permissive Environments*, NDC Forum Paper 9 (June 2009), 186–205.

[273] Colonel Ty Connett and Colonel Bob Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense," *Special Warfare*, July-September 2011.

The strength of both the ALP and VSO is in keeping the footprint small and in focusing at the village level. As Matt Dearing argues, the ALP is "created within a framework that is founded upon security, development, and governance via the Village Stability Operations. VSO engages with civilian, government, and other local actors to bridge informal structures at the local level with more formal structures at the district and provincial level. The long-term capacity of ALP will be dependent upon the viability and resourcing of VSO as the primary infrastructure of paramilitary organization."[274]

The thinking is that when individuals at the village level are secure and see that forces are there and willing to do what needs to be done regarding local development, they will commit to governance. This is generally consistent with COIN theory. Instead of the ANA or ANP, would it be even more effective if local forces from the villages, who know the human and physical terrain intimately and who have deeper motivation to succeed at providing local security, were instead recruited to secure the villages? That is the idea of the ALP.

ALP recruits must be nominated by local shuras, biometrically recorded, vetted by the MOI and National Directorate of Security (NDS), and be between 18 and 45 years old. They should receive three weeks of training by U.S. forces in subjects like the Afghan constitution, rule of law, use of force, driver training, vehicle check point procedures, battle drills, marksmanship, morals and values, and a variety of other topics. There are significant concerns about whether this training is effective, considering some of the training is quite complex and according to reports that up to 90 percent of those working as ALP are illiterate.[275] They can operate only in their own districts, and are supposed to be paid and provided for by the MOI. They sign yearly contracts, and after fulfilling their term of service, they will be allowed to join the ANA, ANP, or Afghan

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[274] Matthew P. Dearing, "Formalizing the Informal: Historical Lessons on Local Defense in Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, December 1, 2011.

[275] Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *From Arbaki to Local Police*, 28.

Border Police (ABP). Salaries are approximately 60 percent of the base ANP salary. Reportedly, 16,000 men have been trained and incorporated into the ALP, as of September 2012.[276]

Their mission is legally restricted. They can be used to protect international organizations and missions, protect key facilities and resources, and improve stability and security in local communities, according to Afghan law, and are only supposed to be organized in areas with a significant lack of security.[277] However, rules of engagement are poorly-defined. The ALP supposedly cannot investigate or arrest, nor are they equipped or trained for offensive operations. They can detain members of insurgent forces, although these powers are not defined either—where, how, when, conditions of detention, or where detention will take place and for how long.[278]

It is claimed that the MOI will oversee both the usage and development of the ALP, as well as the transfer process to other organizations (ANA, ANP, or the Afghan Border Police [ABP]).[279] But the MOI struggles to provide adequate oversight on their own forces in locations where it has established a strong presence; the intent of the ALP is to exist in locations where security is poor and the GIRoA forces struggle to exert influence. Furthermore, ALP has already been in place for almost two years, and it is unclear if any transfer of personnel to ANA, ABP, or ANP has occurred in any location.

F.   IMPLEMENTATION OF ALP

One of the ALP's greatest successes advertised so far has been in Khakrez district, located in north-central Kandahar province. Khakrez is an agrarian district with about 20,000 rural residents. It was increasingly infiltrated by the Taliban after 2001, who by 2008 intimidated the local population into supporting them. In 2009, the U.S. SOF started local VSO, went to local tribal leaders and prioritized requirements, and established ALP. Emblems of success include an increase in business in local bazaars,

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[276] Amie Ferris Rotman, "U.S. Suspends Training of Afghan Local Police Force," *Reuters*, September 2, 2012.

[277] Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *From Arbaki to Local Police*, 13–14.

[278] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 56.

[279] Ibid., 56–7.

local informants against Taliban sympathizers, increases in local dispute resolution ability, the return of internally displaced persons, and increased tourism.[280]

Outside Khakrez, the ALP and the VSO doctrine have been credited for a number of successes across Afghanistan. For instance, the ALP were assessed as radically improving the security situation in Sari Pul, in northern Afghanistan. ALP in this area are known to be former Taliban fighters and have tremendous advantages when it comes to other Afghans in terms of generating intelligence and contesting the tactics and strategy of the Taliban.[281] An Afghan think-tank ascribed local successes to the ALP in Marjah, Musa Qala, and Sanjin districts in Helmand province and indicated that local leaders spoke positively about the ALP's performance in Nuristan, Kunar, and Kunduz provinces.[282] When Bismallah Khan served as the MOI chief, he argued that the ALP were so successful in the east and south that they needed to be replicated in greater numbers in the northern parts of Afghanistan,[283] even though the violence in the northern parts of the country was lower.

In the Zerko Valley, near Herat, successful implementation of VSO has been credited with not just reducing violence and improving the efficiency of targeted operations, but with improving local economics and reducing tribal frictions.[284] Brigadier-General Austin "Scott" Miller, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Commander (CFSOCC) commander in 2011, indicated the Zerko VSO was responsible for improving provincial politics in Kandahar.[285] It is worth noting that the Herat area has never seen a significant Taliban influence, though Ismail Khan, a strong man, ex-mujahidin commander, and currently the Minister of Water and Energy for the

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[280] Catanzaro and Windmueller, "Taking a Stand: Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police."

[281] Quil Lawrence, "In Afghanistan, Some Former Taliban Become Police," *National Public Radio*, January 13, 2012.

[282] Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *From Arbaki to Local Police*, 5–6.

[283] Rowan Scarborough, "Afghan Local Police Key to Success against Taliban," *The Washington Times*, March 29, 2012.

[284] Bernd Horn, "More Than Meets the Eye: The Invisible Hand of SOF in Afghanistan," in Horn and Emily Spencer, ed., *No Easy Task: Fighting in Afghanistan* (Toronto: Dundern, 2012), 148.

[285] Naylor, "Program Has Afghans as First Line of Defense."

Karzai regime, still retains significant influence in the region. Many locals clearly link the empowerment of disciplined armed groups to the effectiveness of government, proclaiming they would cease all support for the government if the government sanctioned predatory or abusive militias.[286]

In Baghlan province, the ALP experience has been very different. The ALP was introduced in August 2010, and almost immediately, local tribal leaders claimed they had not been consulted and they did not want the program. Police Lt. Col. Mohammid Asim Mangal, a district commander, concurred, saying in 2010, "We don't really need this militia. The government needs to build the ANA and ANP instead of giving weapons to uneducated people who don't know the rules."[287] The chief of the Baghlan provincial council, Mohammed Rasoul Mohsini, told Human Rights Watch in an interview in 2011, "The establishment of ALP did not happen in accordance with the MOI directive. Instead the Special Forces went to the thieves and brought in arbakis."[288]

An incident in Baghlan early in August 2010 highlights the dangers to U.S. forces of working too loosely with the ALP. An American patrol reportedly led a U.S.-ALP raid on a supposed Taliban leader's residence, when the ALP brushed past them and directed fire into the ceiling of the house, frightening the family and enraging the local population. Though three individuals with connections to the Taliban were detained, the Americans made the situation worse by firing upon a shadow on the roof, which turned out to be a young boy, who died. Riots broke out in nearby communities, and the people blamed the ALP as much as the Americans for the death of the boy.[289] More problematically, locals insist the boy was actually inside the home, but dragged outside and stabbed with a knife by the ALP,[290] before he assumedly escaped and was accidentally shot.

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[286] Yaroslav Trofimov, "Jobs for Ex-Militants Feed Distrust of Afghan State," *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 2012.

[287] Michael Gisick, "Plan to Convert Taliban, Create Defense Force Has Promise, Peril," *Stars and Stripes*, September 29, 2010.

[288] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 59.

[289] Gisick, "Plan to Convert Taliban, Create Defense Force Has Promise, Peril."

[290] Reid and Muhammedally, *Just Don't Call It a Militia*, 62–3.

In Baghlan, SOF was apparently interested in formalizing a group of individuals they had already worked with as the ALP. These men were mostly ex-Hizb-e-Islami (HIG) fighters, who reportedly had been pushed out of their area of operations by the Taliban.[291] They were led by Nur al-Haq, labeled "a thief, a kidnapper and out of control"[292] by the provincial council chief. Nur al-Haq claimed he joined HIG only because the provincial government could not protect the people from the Taliban who were ravaging his village, Shahabuddin.[293]

Al-Haq has been engaged in a long conflict with the provincial governor, Rasoul Khan, who according to U.S. sources himself runs an armed militia and dominates local trade, including the drug trade. The fact Al-Haq is Pashtun and Rasoul Khan is Tajik is not lost on the United States, nor that in this province, Al-Haq's tribe (Omarkhel) predominately supports the HIG while other tribes (Stanekzai) near Shahabuddin have a tendency to support the Taliban. The provinicial police chief, Gen. Abdur Rahim Rahimi, a Pashtun who himself complained that his predominantly Tajik force routinely ignores his orders and answers instead to Rasoul Khan, indicated that Al-Haq was an effective commander and provided local security—though at the urging of Rasoul Khan, he had opened at least one investigation against Al-Haq which he claimed Al-Haq refused to cooperate in.[294]

Al-Haq threatened Rasoul Khan's bid for provincial hegemony and bureaucratic control, in that individuals in the ALP were conducting illegal activity and Rahimi could not hold them accountable (by design, the ALP are supposed to fall under the ultimate authority of the provincial police chief) because of SOF intervention. The Special Forces commander, working with Al-Haq, called accusations against Al-Haq baseless and

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[291] Gisick, "Plan to Convert Taliban, Create Defense Force Has Promise, Peril." BG Marrs' 15–6 investigation argues the assertion that Nur Al-Haq was part of HIG is not credible. Most of the rest of the Baghlan reporting was assessed as likely credible, however. According to the redacted summary, Marrs specifically addresses allegations from the Human Rights Watch report, and doesn't address similar or different allegations made by journalists like Partlow, Gisick, and Mogelson. See Marrs, "Findings and Recommendations."

[292] Joshua Partlow, "U.S. Initiative to Arm Afghan Villages Carries Some Risks," *Washington Post*, September 6, 2011.

[293] Luke Mogelson, "Bad Guys vs Worse Guys in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, October 19, 2011.

[294] Ibid.

indicated that both Al-Haq and SOF had indeed cooperated in the police chief's investigations of wrong-doing in the area. SOF conjectured the police chief wanted to play both sides—to curry favor by complaining to the Tajiks about Al-Haq's illegal activities, but to refrain from actually doing anything about him, because of the effective security he brought to the Pashtun areas, and SOF provided a convenient foil in the middle of it all. As Luke Mogelson writes:

> At the end of the day, the team leader said, the situation in Baghlan was enormously complicated, and you never truly knew whom to believe. 'We're really trying to do the right thing,' he [the SOF captain responsible for the relationship with the ALP] said. 'One of my intelligence sergeants said it the right way: 'Everybody in some way or form is a bad guy here. So you just have to pick the people who are less bad than others to work with you.[295]

The tensions between GIRoA and locals, between ethnicities and tribes, and between competing interests collided when an ALP member, a Pashtun, heard that a relative of his, a 15-year-old boy, was being sexually abused by a local ANP commander, a Tajik. The Pashtun ALP confronted ANP members in a bazaar who worked for the Tajik commander, and they shot him in the street. An Afghan SOF non-commissioned officer, who literally stumbled upon the scene, attempted to intervene on behalf of the wounded Pashtun. The ALP was shot again and murdered, while observed by the Afghan SOF member. Within minutes, U.S. SOF, more Afghan SOF, angry ALP reinforcements, and the district police chief, along with additional ANP, confronted each other in the street. Predictably, sides commenced firing, including RPG fire, eventually prompting U.S. SOF to call in ISAF close-air support. Multiple ANP and ALP were wounded in the exchange. The local Tajik commander and the ANP who murdered the ALP have not been brought to justice. To SOF's consternation, Rasoul Khan indicates the wounded ANP (which included the Tajik commander who allegedly abused the teen-aged boy) went to India for medical treatment.[296] Years later, it is difficult to understand if justice has yet been administered, though General Rahimi has been removed. Hundreds more

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[295] Ibid.

[296] Ibid.

ALP are being generated and inserted into the local environment,[297] but the situation on the ground regarding Nur Al-Haq, the governor, and the direction of the ALP remains murky.

The ability of ALP, through VSO, to improve the quality of local governance, as well as the coordination between local, district, and provincial government, is generally portrayed as positive, though specifics are lacking. The Department of Defense reported to Congress in October 2011 that VSO had improved local governance and development throughout Afghanistan, though this report provided no specifics as to how governance and development was improved by VSO.[298] Michael A. Sheehan, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, indicated that VSO and ALP have indeed been successful at empowering their communities.[299] None of these endorsements of VSO and the ALP are overwhelming in terms of events, metrics, or specifics.

It is obvious that, as with many programs in Afghanistan, solutions to the frictions and issues associated with GIRoA and ISAF are important to the success of the program. Furthermore, it is obvious that the problems of Afghan society greatly impede the potential successes of the program. Even though the program has potential, it is clearly fraught with lingering problems.

G.   DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS IN THE ALP

Outside of Baghlan, the ALP has experienced numerous problems since 2010. Two notorious incidents include the recent desertion of an entire ALP platoon to the side of the Taliban[300] and the poisoning murders of several members of an ALP unit by

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[297] Ghanizada, "103 Local Police Forces Graduated in Baghlan Province," *Khamma Press*, January 17, 2012.

[298] Department of Defense, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, October 2011, 67.

[299] Michael A. Sheehan, "Advance Policy Questions for Mr Michael A. Sheehan, Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict," November 17, 2011.

[300] Heidi Vogt, "Afghan Local Police Unit Deserts to Taliban-Led Insurgents," *Associated Press*, July 4, 2012.

another member of the unit.[301] Anti-U.S. protests have erupted in some locations over local retaliation murders which were supposedly conducted by ALP members, although at this time these individuals appear to have belonged to unofficial armed groups.[302] Several incidents, including shake-downs, unofficial taxes, and beatings, have been attributed to ALPs in northern Afghanistan.[303] Interestingly, few of the notorious "blue-on-green" attacks have been linked to ALP (only three of all of the attacks seem to have involved ALP),[304] but this has not stopped ALP training from being suspended in September 2012 so that recruits could be re-investigated.[305] Explanations have not been forthcoming as to why this training was suspended, but it seems likely that the ALP is a program that would be particularly vulnerable to insurgent and criminal infiltration.

Some would argue the arbakai is essentially what the ALP and other local militias are.[306] That is, this cultural precept has simply been lifted from the past and is now functioning in the modern day and age (with U.S. support and GIRoA funding) against the Taliban, right? In actuality, no. The central government historically has very little or no influence over the arbakai's actions. They answered to a local community who built them carefully to accomplish very specific purposes. (If the central government needed local forces to provide personnel, almost always for a war, the tribe called a lashkar, which generally served for a limited amount of time). Furthermore, the arbakai typically were not paid (in fact, scholar Mohammed Osman Tariq indicated that being paid for this type of service was shameful). While they acted as a local police force, they were

[301] Michael M. Phillips, "Betrayal, and Death, in the Barracks," *Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 2012.

[302] Abdul Matin Sarfraz and Rod Nordlund, "Afghans Protest Vengeful Militias," *New York Times*, September 2, 2012.

[303] Kimberly Marten, "The Emergence of Rule-Based Security Forces: Lessons from Early Modern State-Building Applied to the Afghan Local Police," (paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, September 2011), 10.

[304] Bill Roggio and Lisa Lundquist, "Green-on-Blue Attacks in Afghanistan: The Data," *The Long War Journal*, updated September 30, 2012. This site purports to include the open-source reporting available on each one of the "blue-on-green" attacks so far since 2009.

[305] Amie Ferris Rotman, "U.S. Suspends Training of Afghan Local Police Force," *Reuters*, September 2, 2012.

[306] Brown notes that in Afghanistan, many U.S. personnel routinely equate the two when ALP are defended, and that local Afghans often call ALPs "arbakai" because they believe them to be the same thing. See Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Afghanistan Trip Report V: The Afghan Local Police: 'It's Local, So It Must Be Good'—Or Is It?" Brookings Institute, May 9, 2012.

intended to enforce borders and boundaries as well as to enforce the dictates of the shura and bring law and order, in ways consistent with pashtunwali and sharia. The ALPs throughout Afghanistan are not only paid and trained by the United States (in a fairly transparent way through the Afghan MOI), they clearly have divided loyalties—whether to the local community, U.S., or GIRoA. This has already been demonstrated in some fairly publicized, contentious cases, where both ALP and GIRoA asserted the ALP worked for and answered to U.S. forces. Both GIRoA and ISAF are doing a disservice to both GIRoA and the ALP by allowing the comparisons between ALP and arbakai to exist.

This leads to another substantial problem facing the ALP: all too often, implementation of rules and requirements regarding the ALP has been lacking, leading to potentially large issues in the future. There are multiple indications that, in many locations, shuras never asked for the ALP to be set up in their local area, though perhaps technically, once they were convinced, their acquiescence accomplished the same effect. Obviously, this means the community is not as supportive of the ALP as both GIRoA and ISAF would hope, considering the ALP's mandate, and furthermore, the ALP itself is distanced from the community in these locations. Citing the example of the arbakai, Don Rector argues "it is important that the ALP program be under the direction of and in coordination with the village elders. It must remain a local force, not directed by the national government, with the only mandate being that of local village defense."[307] If it is not their mandate, the local community will not even support it—which is clearly what has happened in multiple locations, with at least one example of individuals being snatched off the street and forced to serve in the ALP.[308]

In some locations, the ALP does not answer to the district leadership in the way which ISAF or GIRoA intended. CW3 Stephen Rust, a warrant-officer in SOF, reiterates the importance of local community "buy-in" for effective functioning of the police force. While it must be stood up by the local community and it is partnered with a U.S. unit

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[307] Donald F. Rector, a former Army officer, worked for the Human Terrain System in Kandahar when he published this article. See Rector, "An Afghan Solution to an Afghan Problem," *Small Wars Journal*, January 2, 2012.

[308] David Axe, "Afghan Volunteers Told: Volunteer…or Else," *Danger Room*, February 3, 2012.

(who bring much greater resources and firepower), it must answer to the local district-level ANP commander.[309] This does not seem to happen in some locations, meaning the ALP is taking on perspectives and missions which are not synchronized with the district leadership. Instead, especially in locations where pre-existing militias were incorporated en masse to the ALP, often the ALP answers instead to the province, or even ISAF. Even if the chain-of-command is happening correctly and the ALP are indeed answering to the district ANP commander, it must be remembered that many district-level ANP commanders create their own set of problems from incompetence or corruption.[310]

The fact that local individuals are supposed to be nominated by the community and then vetted by MOI and the NDS is an excellent start toward ensuring the correct types of individuals are in the ALP. However, this too has been distorted in some locations; as already noted, in Baghlan, a local militia largely associated with the insurgent group HIG was incorporated into the ALP largely due to the influence of U.S. SOF. The recruitment of former insurgents can only be viewed as problematic. Predictably, many individuals who identify themselves as former Taliban are now members of the ALP.[311] This would be less troublesome if Afghanistan had implemented an effective Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR) program, but the militia leaders and warlords drove the building of the program in 2001 according to their agendas, and it has been limited and inefficient ever since.[312] Local community members know that former insurgents, criminals, and militiamen belong to the ALP, and though some are supportive, many are not. Many feel that criminals and terrorists are being empowered by this program to control local areas. Predictably, this is

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[309] CW3 Stephen N. Rust, "The Nuts and Bolts of Village Stability Operations," *Special Warfare*, July/September 2011.

[310] This point is touched on by both Vanda Felbab-Brown and the AIHRC. See Brown, "Afghanistan Trip Report V: The Afghan Local Police"; Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), *From Arbaki to Local Police*, 22.

[311] Quil Lawrence, "In Afghanistan, Some Former Taliban Become Police."

[312] Simonetta Rosetti and Antonio Guistozzi, *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR) in Afghanistan: Constraints and Limited Capabilities*, CSRC Working Papers, 2006; Caroline A. Hartzell, "Missed Opportunities: The Impact of DDR on SSR in Afghanistan," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 270, April 2011.

problematic to local GIRoA officials, who look at some ALP units and are frightened to see the ANAP again or even warlord-led militias from the 1990s.

Many European allies in ISAF are also unmotivated about the prospects the ALP bring to the security environment. Indeed, "UK officials…have expressed concerns over the ability of a home guard with only 40 hours' training to keep the Taliban from taking back villages and towns from which the insurgents were driven out in the past two years." Civilian aid organizations are more critical and see in it a re-hashing of the same failed strategies implemented just a few years ago. Brad Adams, Asia Director for Human Rights Watch, argues, "The ALP has come to be a key rationale for the U.S. drawdown, because they can't do the training and equipping of the ANSF in time." Furthermore, "[t]he ALP is not supposed to have heavy weapons. If they now expect them to occupy space militarily to protect civilians from insurgents, they do not seem to be the right force. But if they are going to be that force, maybe they're going to be just another militia."[313]

Sadly, the abuses committed by the ALP are predictable, and while headline-grabbing, perhaps just one of the myriad issues associated with the ALP. Individuals with limited vetting (in reality) and limited training are simply going to revert to strategies of frustration and resentment when put in truly challenging situations. Abuses of the population, especially the most shocking crimes like murder and rape, will lessen over time as the ALP are better mentored and negative actors are removed from the organizations. However, offenses ranging from collection of illegal "taxes" to illegal detentions of "suspicious" personnel will be much more difficult to deal with, and will require consistent time and effort. Abuses within the ALP against other members of the ALP or ANP, however, will be even more difficult to deal with.[314] Rapid and effective attention must be paid to these issues, however, if the ALP, and GIRoA by extension, intend to retain legitimacy.

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[313] Julian Borger, "U.S. Reliance on Afghan Paramilitaries in Rural Areas Worries European Allies," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2012.

[314] Rod Nordlund, "Afghan Officer Sought in Killings of 9 Colleagues," *New York Times*, March 8, 2012.

In a pressing issue associated with the discourse on DDR and security, what will happen to the Afghans serving in the ALP when or if it does disarm? When are any of them going to be incorporated into the ANP or ANA? With proposed drawdowns seemingly certain for the size of Afghan forces,[315] do any ALP truly have hopes of being integrated into the ANA or ANP? It seems only reasonable to expect armed young men, who have received only a modicum of military training and who have little in the way of education or other prospects, from a culture that has seen hundreds of thousands of brothers and fathers and grandfathers turn to resistance, brigandage, and warlordism over the past 30 years, to form their own armed groups in an attempt to eke out a living. Brigadier General Jefforey Smith, recently NATO deputy commander for police training in Afghanistan, told journalist Luke Mogelson, "That's the $64 million question. …In theory, the improvement of security over time creates opportunity for improved governance and economic development, and with that you have other employment opportunities that don't exist today."[316] There is little evidence that such theories will prove valid, especially in the mountains of Afghanistan, which has probably crushed more theories than it has empires.

It must be noted that the ALP is likely to be, at least partially, a victim of "mistaken identity." It has been reported that many militias have been organized and armed by provincial leadership without approval from Kabul.[317] Some warlords have set up militias on their own[318] (a common enough problem in Afghanistan), and locals are justifiably confused about what, where, and why something is legitimate. It is likely that some of the criticism that is directed against the ALP by Afghans is generated by the confusion vis-à-vis other groups and militias.

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[315] Yaroslav Trofimov, "Afghan General Sounds Alarm," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 February 2010.

[316] Mogelson, "Bad Guys vs Worse Guys in Afghanistan."

[317] Jason Motlagh, "Afghan Militias: The Perils of Trying to Duplicate Iraq," *TIME*, October 27, 2010; Gretel C. Kovach, "As U.S. Scales Back in Afghanistan, Local Defense Program Expands," *UT San Diego*, August 15, 2011.

[318] Marten, "The Emergence of Rule-Based Security Forces," 9.

Perhaps most troubling, results of an unpublished Rand study indicate that levels of violence are no different in regions with ALP than before they had ALP.[319] That is, there appears to be no statistical correlation between the existence of ALP and some sort of control exerted over the violence endemic to Afghanistan at a micro-level. While James Dobbins, former ambassador to Afghanistan and current director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at Rand, calls that outcome successful,[320] if violence existed at a level which is apparently so high it attracts the attention of U.S. forces, grew to an even higher level when U.S. forces came to the area, and then, after the establishment of ALP, dropped to the level it existed prior to the establishment of the ALP, the program seems wasteful, flawed, and redundant, since the ALP apparently lacks a consistent or measurable effect in improving security for the local population by reducing violence.

H.   CONCLUSION

It is safe to say the ALP would never have been pursued as a strategy in Afghanistan without the influence of the United States as the "invited leviathan." The ALP emerged as a powerful idea in 2009 but they were initially funded by the United States and to this day are trained and mentored by U.S. forces. Some Afghans within the government and outside of the government have been deeply skeptical of the ALP and considering the lack of success the Afghans have experienced with local defense forces since 2001, it is difficult to expect much support for the program if it was not for the U.S.'s financing, training, and mentorship.

The arbakai, is very different from the ALP in either practice or actuality. (General Petreaus himself has been careful to point out the distinctions).[321] The arbakai are selected according to cultural precedent and led by local Pashtuns when a specific threat has been identified, and are disbanded when the threat has been neutralized. The

[319] David S. Cloud and Laura King, "Afghan Police Units Tangled in Criminal Activity," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 2012.

[320] Dan De Luce, "Pentagon Defends Afghan Local Police Program," *Armed Forces Press*, May 14, 2012.

[321] General David Petraeus, interview by Matthew Green, *Financial Times*, February 7, 2011.

ALP is a local militia, trained for largely static missions by U.S. personnel, consistent with GIRoA policies, and "rubber-stamped" by local traditional leadership.

VSO, and therefore ALP, are largely (if not entirely) U.S. ideas, and were indeed funded, equipped, and trained by the United States until the MOI was capable of taking it over. From the strategic level among U.S. and GIRoA leaders, the ALP is a program that is essentially organized, trained, and utilized, for the most part, as intended. Nonetheless, at the tactical level in the villages, valleys, and districts, the ALP is functioning in ways more consistent with the motivations and interests of local Afghan strong-men. This is because U.S. tactical units are willing to compromise when it comes to strengthening the state or extending the reach of the central government, since the metrics of the local government and the effectiveness of local security are their predominant concerns. Because the Afghan state has historically had a weak center, further intensified by 30 years of conflict, the traditional power-brokers, tribes, and war-lords continue to exert the most significant influence at the local level. The ALP therefore provides an example of compromised state-building at the lowest level in Afghanistan.

Reports from some districts are that the ALP, through the VSO doctrine, has provided the central government a method by which to reach local populations in a legitimate and extractive manner. This is clearly not the case in other districts, where the ALP has been subverted by local strong-men and has assumed predatory behavior that readily recalls the brutality of the 1990s—behavior which most of the citizenry abhors. It seems unlikely that the ALP, as an institution across the state, has contributed in a significant manner to improving the ability of the state to reach the citizenry in a responsible and competent fashion.

It is too early to see the effect the ALP, as well as the series of armed groups since 2001, have truly had on the development of the state of Afghanistan. There is no doubt that a number of talented, intelligent, and hard-working individuals are overseeing the program and continually improving it, and the results of training stand-down in September 2012 are so far unknown. The United States has spent a significant amount of intellectual and materiel capital in developing VSO doctrine and implementing the ALP across Afghanistan. But a true measure of effectiveness lies in the ways such programs

are embraced by the state they are ostensibly designed to support, and in the effects these programs have in facilitating the local population's acceptance of the central government. So far, the results seem to indicate limited promise.

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IV. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that many "practitioners" (in this case, military personnel and individuals working for the U.S. government) are often characterized as being almost uncritically supportive of the idea of militias,[322] and conversely, that the discourse of most scholars and policy-makers is viewed as fearful of militias,[323] the reality is that militias or armed groups are complex creations of very specific circumstances and geography, are highly dependent on particular strong men, criminals, militaries, politicians, bureaucrats, and a myriad of other factors in the local environment, vary widely in their organizational motivations, and have different outcomes. There is little real empirical evidence regarding militias; however, case-studies provide a useful method for understanding the effects these militias have on state-building, and vice versa.

Militias can be effective actors for controlling violence, as in Iraq. They can also be vehicles for inclusion of groups into the institutions of the state, which theoretically reduces the volume of discontent against the regime in charge, and which ideally reduces participation in insurgency. The militias can, however, be less successful. In Afghanistan, the record of the ALP has been mixed thus far, and seems to have little to no effect on inclusion or the population's perceptions of the Karzai government. Though violence has been reduced in some locations, it has not in others, and it is uncertain as to whether the ALP has a measurable effect on local security.

Militias have a high propensity to result in compromised state-building. The implementation of the SOI did, while the ALP has had a less tangible effect on what is already a deeply compromised state. It remains to be seen, however, how debilitating compromised state-building actually is.

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[322] For a somewhat overcharged example of this point, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Afghanistan Trip Report V: The Afghan Local Police: 'It's Local, So It Must Be Good'—Or Is It?."

[323] Seth Jones states it is "de rigueur" for academics to argue against militias. See Jones, *The Strategic Logic of Militias*, 34.

B.   EFFECT OF SOI ON IRAQ

While some analysis of the SOI has been quite acclamatory in terms of its outcomes,[324] it is important to recall that there were a number of very specific phenomena associated with the development of the SOI.

The strong men, or the sheikhs, had been empowered in specific ways for close to two decades by Saddam Hussein and, therefore, a large segment of the Iraqi population viewed them as legitimate leadership. Sources of legitimacy are varied but strong men must have some sort of legitimacy in order for their armed groups to exert influence that is not entirely dependent on the control of violence. These sheikhs needed sources of patronage to maintain their own influence, and they were in conflict with AQI over control of sources of revenue, social control, and violence. It is obvious that genuine grievance, in this case the competition over resources, social control, and violence, drives the emergence of these armed groups.

By 2006, AQI, despite their intense recruitment of locals and their partnership with other insurgent groups, committed egregious errors that eroded support from among the Sunni population for AQI (and especially eroded support for AQI within the nationalist resistance). Not all insurgencies have fissures in them, neither do organizations always make exploitable mistakes.

Though it had been attempted previously, it was not until 2006 that the sheikhs were able to create an alliance that had the weight to oppose AQI. Also, by 2006, U.S. units had matured in their understanding of COIN and state-building, but more importantly, in their grasp of Iraqi culture and politics. As such, they were willing to support the sheikhs financially, militarily, and politically as they attempted to implement their plans for local security. It was critically important that an effective partnership, which was conceived and organized at the local level by local strong men, was instituted before the militia came into existence.

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[324] Long, et al., conclude the SOI were a "very positive" experience in their study. See Austin Long, Stephanie Pezard, Bryce Loidolt, and Todd C. Helmus, *Locals Rule: Historical Lessons for Creating Local Defense for Afghanistan and Beyond* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2012)

The Iraqi government put aside their suspicions and acquiesced to the sheikhs and U.S. leadership in order to organize and better support the Sahwa and the SOI, and as time progressed, took over the program and incorporated these individuals into the government. That GoI was prodded and pushed to take actions toward accepting the SOI cannot be overlooked.

GoI's reluctance to support the SOI reflects the uncomfortable reality that Iraq needed to make enormous progress in order to become a highly functional state. Intense internal disputes over institutions, representation, resources, and control continue to put the state in a precarious position. The U.S. decision to align with local strong men and develop militias did indeed provide security and allow the United States to redeploy forces, but the cost may have been the reinvigoration of "shadow state" institutions. As Iraq expert Toby Dodge warned, if the strong men of the "shadow state" exert control over the institutions of the state, "a veneer of legal-rational bureaucracy will have been placed on top of the shadow state with its tried and tested use of violence, patronage, and favoritism."[325]   While there are some indications that this may have occurred, it is too early to parse through the variety of issues in the state of Iraq and stay that this has definitively happened.

C.   EFFECT OF ALP ON AFGHANISTAN

The history of militias in Afghanistan is far different from Iraq. Likewise, the history of the state as an ontological device is also very different in Afghanistan. Strong men and militias have been responsible not just for massive casualties and the destruction of Kabul in the 1990s, but also for the defeat of the Taliban (in partnership with U.S. forces in 2001–2002) and the protection of the nascent state in 2002 and 2003. Consequently terms like "warlord," "strong man," "militia," and "arbakai" have become almost pejoratives among the population in Afghanistan, loaded with meanings and histories that Westerners often do not fully grasp.

State-sponsored militias have been used in Afghanistan since 2001, with generally poor results. The CDI, AP3, CDF, ANAP, and plethora of lesser known programs have

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[325] Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied*, 170–1.

uniformly failed to achieve significant results, but the United States has continually learned from the experiences, and funded new variations on the theme. The ALP is a program that was designed with the errors of previous programs in mind, as well as a belief in the traditional systems of the Afghans. Results, however, so far have been mixed.

ALP personnel have been involved in human rights violations and predatory behavior, which local populations have protested. It also appears that the ALP does not improve the local security situation in many of the communities in which they operate. It is difficult to see how the program improves the perception of legitimacy for the district, provincial, or central government.

The position of the Karzai government toward the ALP is nebulous at this time. Karzai announced the establishment of the ALP in 2010, and his government has superficially funded it (the justification of funding for individual programs by a government that receives 97 percent of its revenue from aid, mostly from the United States, is problematic on a number of levels).[326] The program does not accomplish, in a high volume, what the United States intended for it to provide (local security) and in many locations it has clearly been twisted by strong men into militias serving their interests. There is no doubt that the ALP program constitutes an example of compromised state-building in Afghanistan.

As in Iraq, however, it remains to be seen whether compromised state-building will be satisfactory. Compromised state-building, considering the prominence of strong men, the centralization of the relatively weak state under Karzai, and the massive international presence, seems a likely outcome for almost any state-building endeavor in Afghanistan. In the case of the ALP, compromised state-building seems unlikely to be enough to improve the quality of local governance.

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[326] Mark Memmott, "Billions in Afghan Aid May Not Do Long-Term Good, Senate Report Warns," *National Public Radio*, June 8, 2011.

D.   LESSONS LEARNED

There are numerous lessons to be learned from the SOI and ALP case-studies. Local militias can indeed improve the ability of the central state to govern, but certain circumstances must occur. It is also noted that in the case of the SOI and the ALP, a set of very specific circumstances existed: a trilateral relationship between three parties (the militias, the host state, and the external state), and that the external state was the United States, who regularly exerts more military, economic, and political influence than any other power on the globe today.

In a developing state, especially in a post-conflict environment, militias are likely already in existence. Post-conflict states, especially those with imposed polities, are prone to political instability and violence.[327] State-level leaders may control patronage and access to markets and use the threat of violence to control the state. In such an environment, militias pose their own political economy.[328] As Klare argues, when violence increases, the likelihood that local populations will assume responsibility for their own security increases.[329] It is likely, then, that post-conflict state-builders will come into contact with militias, and must formulate a strategy for how to deal with them ahead of time. In Afghanistan, for instance, the United States knew very well that militias existed in the 1990s and alliances were forged in 2001 in order to destroy the Taliban regime with these militias. As the state was formed, the militias became part of the government, and were continually viewed as a viable organism for imparting security. That none of the state-sponsored militias have worked adequately does not alter that fact.

It is critical that all parties—the peace-builders or "external leviathan," the state elites, and the strong men or subnational elites—invest in the militia program for it to be relatively successful. In this case, "success" can be defined in any variety of ways depending on security requirements as well as local conditions, but at minimum, success

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[327] Andrew T. Enterline & J. Michael Greig, "Perfect Storms? Political Instability in Imposed Polities and the Futures of Iraq and Afghanistan," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52: 6 (December 2008), 910.

[328] Reno, "The Politics of Violent Opposition in Collapsing States," 128.

[329] Klare. "The Deadly Connection: Paramilitary Bands, Small Arms Diffusion, and State Failure," 120–1.

is a program that provides local security, acts in a relatively legitimate and ethical manner, and does not degrade the sovereignty of the state. In Iraq, all three parties were intensely invested in the Sahwa and then the SOI in 2006 and 2007. Strong men in Anbar were tired of AQI's impingement on their profit-making endeavors and efforts to control the Sunni population, as well as the potential for patronage opportunities they sensed elsewhere. U.S. forces, weary after three years of rising conflict, were desperate for a sliver of light, some sort of positive change from the endless cycle of sectarian killings and anti-U.S. violence, and they had plenty of resources and effort to channel into a winning strategy. The Iraqi government was afraid of Sunni empowerment but even more afraid of losing control of the government, and since they were deeply obligated to U.S. wishes, they aggressively supported the SOI.

In a related manner, support must be given and control must be exerted over the militia. The Sahwa, and then SOI, were partnered with U.S. units who, for the most part, implemented close partnerships. These militias were vulnerable to AQI predation and, early on, lacked significant resources to defend themselves; the intelligence they generated and the tactics they used, since they had many ex-insurgents in their ranks, cut both ways. Strong men could easily pervert these militias to their purposes (which has occurred in Afghanistan). U.S. forces recognized that the potential collapse of these militias had strategic consequences that belied their tactical influence on the local battlefield. To ensure they were not overwhelmed, U.S. forces provided them with medical care, close-air support and armed reinforcement, logistical support, and various other battlefield support—and in the halls of power at the provincial and national level. Conversely, since militia have a high potential for atrocity and predatory behavior,[330] U.S. forces monitored their actions and coordinated activity with the Iraqi government. The Iraqi government was concerned about the influence of these groups and implemented controls on their actions, which was supported by the United States, including prosecuting SOI who committed crimes.

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[330] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 108.

Because of the high potential for predatory behavior that may cause strategic effects that far outweigh the tactical value of the militia, the militias must be carefully organized. Successful and effective militias must be trained and/or competent at their tasks. In the case-study of Iraq, although training provided to the SOI was uneven and uncoordinated at the highest levels, the missions of the SOI were generally understood by the SOI and the partnership between most U.S. units (and, increasingly, Iraqi military units) ensured the SOI generally stuck to basic security tasks. Furthermore, it is likely that a large percentage of the individuals participating in not just the Sahwa but the SOI were ex-Iraqi military, active or ex-tribal guardsmen, and ex-insurgents—individuals who were familiar with weapons, basic principles of small-unit tactics, intelligence-gathering, and who were motivated by conducting militia activity for reasons which went beyond collecting a paycheck. In the ALP, on the other hand, the training and oversight of individuals regarding their tasks does not appear adequate.

Because militias are vulnerable to serious insurgent retaliations and U.S. forces cannot be physically present at all times, strength needs to be reinforced. That is, militias appear more successful if they are developed and strengthened in locations where the local population has already largely rejected the insurgent ideology. There were steps toward militia organizations in Iraq prior to the Sahwa in 2006, but they did not work for a variety of reasons—one of which was that the balance of power was often against them. When the Sahwa emerged in late 2006, the Anbar tribes were already in violent conflict with AQI, and the United States proved to be a viable partner in terms of reinforcing success. Even though combat was a near-daily occurrence for the Sahwa and SOI through 2006 and 2007, they knew that most of the local communities supported them and had turned against AQI's extremist ideology. Furthermore, the government supported them, and the population was vested in the government enforcing security, even it was through the strength of the SOI. Conversely, it seems uncertain that ALP stood up in Afghanistan are in areas where the population fully rejects Taliban or anti-GIRoA ideology.

A plan for disarmament must be designed into any plan for usage of militias, unless militias are conceived as part of the long-term plan for local security (which was not the case in Iraq and does not appear to be the case in Afghanistan). In the long-term,

when security is established and widespread overt violence has ended, the state's military and police must not compete with local armed groups who act in provincial interests, as the state's law, order, and enforcement mechanisms would therefore be disrupted. The incorporation of these individuals into the government's security forces is a viable option, as are re-training and education programs associated with DDR arrangements. In Iraq, a large number of SOI have been incorporated into the military and other ministries of the state. A provision is in place to do the same in Afghanistan, though implementation remains to be seen.

One of the important points that can be gleaned from U.S. experiences working with the SOI and ALP is this: compromised state-building is a form of state-building that can be effective and worthwhile. In Iraq, compromised state-building led to a reduction in violence state-wide, inclusion for groups into the Iraqi government (most of whom were Sunni), and new actors in national and local politics, many of whom exerted leadership. From a U.S perspective, the process by which state-building was compromised also resulted in the means to re-direct forces, resources, and strategy, and eventually effect the draw-down and re-deployment. Compromised state-building may indeed be the most preferred outcome when one objectively considers the entire process of state-building in a post-conflict developing state. Strong men and other local subnational elites may view compromised statebuilding as a good process in which they shape a participatory process for their future. Peace-builders are still likely to lay a framework upon the state that creates a form of government which, at the very least, is preferred over the previous government, and which responds in some way to the peace-builders. State elites will gain prestige and resources from outside of the state (from the peacebuilders) while they continue to work with subnational elites and strong men adjusting the form of state as well as important issues like security and resource-sharing. In this case, compromised state-building must also formalize these negotiated principles in order for the state to develop truly improved institutions.[331]

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[331] Barnett and Zurcher, "The Peacebuilder's Contract: How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood," 47–9.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a dearth of specific evidence regarding the effects of SOI on the function of the Iraqi state. Furthermore, our understanding of the civil-military relationship in Anbar as well as the Iraqi state as a whole has lost fidelity since the U.S. military withdrawal in 2011. Reliance on interviews and published works regarding the Awakening and the SOI was useful, but it is clear that the perspective of the "common Iraqi" who might have been involved in the insurgency, crime, tribal relations, the Awakening, and/or the SOI was lacking. The data that has been gathered lacks some specificity on the themes addressed in this thesis. Critically evaluated and dispassionate analysis is beginning to emerge from the Iraq conflict but much remains to be developed.

The ALP are a relatively new phenomenon and the data which has been published about this program so far largely comes from humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on one side, and from the U.S. military community on the other. Each side has certain agendas. Journalists have written about the program, as well, but, at least partially since the program is still growing and developing, the program lacks a truly detailed, comprehensive analysis which examines the program critically at the local, provincial, and national-level. The current environment is politically charged and with U.S. forces still growing the ALP at this time, it is unlikely that more specific, critical, and dispassionate analysis will come for some time.

The U.S. military is in the process of finalizing the re-write of FM 3–24 *Counterinsurgency* at this time. The implications of the use of militias in U.S. doctrine should be fully considered.

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